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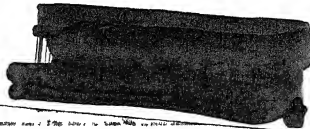
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DRURY RANDALL

by
Mary Johnston



SILVER CROSS

1492

CROATAN

THE GREAT VALLEY

MICHAEL FORTH

THE EXILE

HUNTING SHIRT

MISS DELICIA ALLEN

DRURY RANDALL

Drury Randall

Mary Johnston



BOSTON

1934

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DRURY RANDALL

THE Elderfield Baptist Revival of the Year of Grace 1837 provided no fewer than thirty converts. The one of whom this narrative takes cognizance was Drury Randall, aged twelve. Drury's kith and kin, dwelling in Elderfield and Albany County roundabout, and on his mother's side several hundred miles away in Tidewater, Virginia, were quartered into Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, and James Randall, his father, who was called an atheist, although he had once stated in his paper, the *Albany County Herald*, that he was a deist, as had been many considerable men before him, including Mr. Jefferson. In tenderest infancy Drury had been baptized into Calvinism, but he possessed a Baptist great-aunt who was a proselyter of the first water. She it was who took him for her escort to the revival four evenings running. James Randall was away in Richmond at a Democratic Convention. Maria Randall, Drury's mother, expected within three months her sixth child, and besides, she was a musician and a novel reader, and woefully lukewarm in religion. "Like most Episcopalians," quoth Aunt Patsy. "Besotted on rites and hierarchy. Losing God in garments. Not that Maria ever really found Him to lose Him. — But I should not speak to you so of your mother! I beg your pardon, Drury."

"How did you become a Baptist, Aunt Patsy?

Wasn't Grandfather a Presbyterian?" They were walking under stars to the Baptist church and the Revival.

"Yes. His people were Presbyterians from Cromwell's time down. But my blessed mother was a Baptist — praise be! I had my sprinkling of water, just as you had, Drury, when I was a babe and couldn't protest or say I hadn't chosen. But when I was fifteen, Brother David Montgomery, who was a saint indeed, converted me. I went down into the river and I came up — I went down into the river and I came up!"

"Sally says the Episcopalians are the most fashionable and thought-on."

"'Fashionable and thought-on'! — O Lord Jesus Christ!"

"And the Presbyterians have the most learning."

"And is Salvation measured with the yardstick of learning?"

"What *is* Salvation?"

"I pray you may learn to-night!"

They had the better part of a mile to walk, and the stars were bright indeed. "Look, there's a shooting star! . . . I like 'The Pilgrim's Progress' — and Bunyan was a Baptist."

"He was indeed, and a holy man. A great sinner first and then a holy man."

"You gave it to me and I like it, Aunt Patsy."

"Child, child, I would be a help to you if I may!" From the depth of her ardent heart she wished it, the tall, gaunt lady in black walking beside young Drury Randall.

And so they came to the Baptist church, small and

simple, lamp-lighted, folk streaming in. The revivalist, traveling from church to church, was not Brother David Montgomery, dead long ago and gone to his reward, but a man of fifty, Brother Pickering, who had the gift. He had it indeed; he could split the obdurate rock and crowd the mourners' bench. Young, middle-aged and old, men, women and children, were fish for his net. Twelve-year-old Drury and his great-aunt Patsy, going in, were caught in a wave of song.

"The Son of God goes forth to war
A kingly crown to gain.
His blood-red banner streams afar.
Who follows in his train?"

The pastor, the Reverend William Upjohn, an elderly, wise and lovable man, led the singing. A quiet man, dreaming his own dreams and walking his own ways, he was not exactly in love with camp meetings and the general run of revivals. But his deacons and his congregation and the times thought differently, and he did not withstand them.

"Saviour, visit Thy plantation,
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain —"

Beside the pastor stood the visiting revivalist, and his eyes shone and his forehead glistened under his thatch of black hair. He meant to take fish to-night. Had not One said to him in the pine grove, "I will make you a fisherman of men —"?

Drury Randall was not taken that evening, nor the next, nor the next, though on the second he became enthralled, and on the third the tears rolled down his

young cheeks. But on the fourth evening he went to the mourners' bench, Aunt Patsy blessing him aloud as he left the pew. One half hour later he "came through"; he was Converted.

Early the next week James Randall returned by stage from Richmond. In that town the weather had been heated and the Convention heated. Albany County that was lifted several thousand feet above the sea, that had purple mountains to gaze upon and an abundant leaving of high forest, seemed to his deep-set, gray-blue eyes profoundly his own and desirable. The venerable stagecoach, its four horses now straining, now able to take it "loose and easy", as the saying was, crossed Old Cherokee River by the covered bridge that resounded to its passage. The fireflies were tinkling, the evening air breathed cool; in Elderfield household lamps and candles were lighted. He entered Elderfield from the east, and his house stood at the western edge. Warren's Tavern, where the coach stopped, rose midway. The horn blew, they rattled through a half mile of High Street. Places of business, churches, the courthouse and dwellings with shady yards and gardens appeared happily beaded on the same string. It brought him past his own place of business, the low brick building behind buckeye trees where was edited, hand-set and printed the *Albany County Herald*. He turned in his seat to glimpse it, and it settled against his bosom with a deep, reticent love. He'd be down there early next morning. The next *Herald* should have the Convention intact, with caustic and just and not unhumorous comment and some prophecy.

Macduffie's store, Tom Webb's law office, the courthouse, Baliol Robertson's law office, Penfield's pharmacy, the Presbyterian church, Scott's store, Warren's house, lights, and the horses at a standstill, and descending travelers, and old Warren himself with Jacob his son, and helping Negroes.

"Is that you, Mr. Randall? Welcome back!"

"Thank you, Mr. Warren. Elderfield looks pretty good to me."

"You'll be giving us everything in the *Herald*, I reckon. Must have had some Oratory!"

"We did."

"If you ask my opinion, swapping Andrew Jackson for Martin Van Buren wasn't much of a swap! We've got old Hard Times strong, the old scalper!"

"The times are disturbing. But they always are. — May I have a boy for my valise? Mrs. Randall did not expect me before to-morrow."

His own house stood in Old Street at the very edge this way of Elderfield. It had been a small dwelling when he brought Maria there, an old, small house going back to Elderfield's beginnings, to pioneer times, to the verge of Indian days. But as the children came and came, he threw out a wing and then another. Now it stood substantial enough and somehow pleased him. The yard in front was narrow and Maria had it too packed with flowers, but behind the house a large garden slipped restfully down to Cherokee Creek. He owned the land across the creek; he owned indeed, by and large, a good deal of land. He conceived that it would come in handy, with six children, even if they stopped at that.

Drury, Maria or Molly, Ann, James, Fitzhugh, and whatever they might name the coming branch. He opened the gate and crossed the fragrant strip. Spice pinks, damask roses, peonies. The door stood open, so warm was the evening. A lamp burned in the hall. Ann was trotting across with her doll. "Ann!" — "Oh, it's father!" There occurred an irruption. "Father — Father — Father!"

"Mr. Randall, I did not look for you until to-morrow!"

They had ended supper, but they sat down again with him. Maria, her sister on a visit, Miss Emmeline Mason, the children, Molly, Ann and Jim. Fitzhugh, the two-year-old, slept in a trundle bed upstairs. "Where is Drury?"

"Aunt Patsy asked him to supper."

Molly began some communication, but her mother checked her with a look. "I will tell your father about that."

Ezekiel waited. Ceres in the kitchen sent in hot, clear coffee and hominy mush and light rolls and cold meat. Maria, behind the urn, apologized for the slimness. "Emmeline and the children and I thought there were just ourselves. Ezekiel, give your master the honey."

Supper was over, the children gone to bed. Emmeline Mason retired to her own chamber. In the parlour, the evening air and garden fragrance and many a flying, minute creature entering at window, the married pair held desultory converse. Maria, moving slowly to the sofa, drew over her a light shawl.

"How have you been?"

"Oh, as well as I could look for. — Was Richmond satisfactory?"

He walked up and down with his hands locked behind him, a customary action. Her finely modeled head, throat and shoulders pressed an old wine-colored silk pillow. Her eyes, dark and darkly marked beneath, were now for him and now for her pianoforte and now for a book upon the table. The book was "The Pilgrims of the Rhine" by Bulwer. She rather longed — though she loved her husband and what he was saying was interesting enough — but she rather longed to be quiet and free in the big bed, with Mr. Randall asleep, and on her side a candle on the candle stand, and her book propped with a pillow. But there was something first that must be got over with, and her abundant imagination showed her absolutely how Mr. Randall would take it. He presently gave her an opening. "Isn't it time Drury was home?"

"He will be presently. I want to speak to you about Drury. He's been converted."

"Converted?"

"He's gotten religion. At the Baptist revival. He wants to be immersed."

"Immersed!"

"It's very difficult for me to stand out against Aunt Patsy. I know how to deal with my own kind and some other kinds, but she is steadily too much for me. So when she dropped by one day and said, what is true, that she had no one to go to church with her in the evenings, and if Drury was willing, might he do it, I —"

"You gave in. I wish you had not, Maria."

"I wish so too, now, Mr. Randall. But the mischief is done — if it is mischief."

"If it is! Aunt Patsy is a fanatic and the boy a fool!"

"Oh, Drury isn't a fool, Mr. Randall." Maria turned the pillow and put back the damp hair from her brow. She sighed and looked at her own childhood-into-girlhood. "At that age one is just an Æolian harp. Every wind makes some kind of music and the poor brain thinks it is *the* music. It *is*, too, though you must take it with the rest."

"He gets that pliability from you. I haven't got it and don't want it. Yet he's like me, too."

"Yes, that is true," said Maria. "You'd better talk to him — to-morrow."

Randall walked up and down, his hands no longer behind him but clenched at his sides. He felt anger against Aunt Patsy, the Baptist church and its revival, churches generally and their encroachments and monopolies and assumptions. . . . The folly of humanity, and especially of women! The aching comfort and forever-dashed pride of offspring. The nettles with the roses that swung against a man when he opened the door of home-coming. . . . He was tired and angry, and the two produced depression. "I am going to bed," he announced. "I'll talk to Drury to-morrow. And to Aunt Patsy. I'll go to see Mr. Upjohn. The fool boy has been baptized once. And though I don't see that one church is better than another, he'd better stay where he was put. Until he's out of childhood, anyhow."

Crossing to the sofa, he bent and kissed Maria.

"Good night. I don't suppose you could have helped it — sweetheart!"

She gave him her smile, at once wry and sweet. She looked as tired as he. The heat and the load. "Well, I am glad that you are at home!"

In the morning, and so early that the dew yet shone upon the grass, Aunt Patsy in her small house proved, as he knew she would, as immovable and as unapologetic as the Rock of Gibraltar or the Natural Bridge. As set as granite and as elusive as air. His aunt and he sat in her minute porch, all covered with morning-glories. She was but fifteen years his senior. "Aunt Patsy, I am very much disturbed at this that Maria tells me of Drury."

"And why should you be disturbed, unless you are joyfully so?"

"I do not think you should have taken him, night after night, to this revival without my consent."

"Oh, your consent, when the Lord moves!"

"My consent is, however, necessary to any further action, and it will not be forthcoming."

"You mean that you will not consent to his baptism and joining the church?"

"Just that."

"I feared as much. Atheism would provide itself children."

"I am not an atheist. Except as to the God in which most of you seem to believe. — Drury was baptized as a babe according to the rite of the Presbyterian church. Once is enough."

"Sprinkled as an unconscious infant! Exercising not the least choice as to the body in which he shall be

numbered! Consciously rejecting no sin nor entering any path!"

"I see your point. Too young then and too young now."

"Not at twelve years old, James Randall. Not at twelve years old. How many unfoldings did you or I have before that time!"

Randall, in a rush-bottomed chair, his arm along the porch rail, brought with his long, gaunt, strong hand a purple morning-glory nearer to his gaze. He was a long, sinewy, tawny man, with an eagle beak and a wide, close-lipped mouth, and not without a family likeness to his Aunt Patsy. She could fight, the old spiritual tigress! he was thinking now. He could fight too; he had been fighting all his life, but he did it with judgment, which made the difference. He also thought there was little use in fighting any longer here on her morning-glory porch. She wouldn't change till the last day, if then. He got up. "You know my mind, Aunt Patsy. I'm going now to see Mr. Upjohn."

Miss Patsy flamed at him. "It's an atheist mind. I don't take any stock in your fine discriminations! And the Lord will yet deliver Drury and the other poor children, too, out of your hand!"

He went away with that pleasant taste in his mouth. The Reverend William Upjohn, in his plain frame house, — Brother Upjohn, his people called him — was not a spiritual tiger, but a quiet and reasonable man and gentleman. He had been long in Elderfield, and the editor of the *Herald* — until this bone of contention appeared in the path — had entertained a good

opinion of him. Now, in the small room, spare and plain as to creature comforts but with more and other books than one would have supposed and with an engraving of Rembrandt's "Supper at Emmaus", Mr. Upjohn proceeded to reinstate himself. "You are mistaken, Mr. Randall. I would not have baptized Drury, nor admitted him to my church in your absence or without your consent. He is still a child, and as to outward actions under your control. It was my intention to call upon you in your office to-day, having learned from Jacob Warren that you arrived in the coach last night."

Randall drummed with his fingers on the deal table. "I am glad that you recognize parental rights, Mr. Upjohn. It is more than does Miss Patsy Randall. If I may speak my mind, sir, these camp meetings and revivals up and down — one denomination or another, it does not matter — are a discredit to our times! Ill-judged, violent, childish jumpings at the soul of man —"

The big, still man opposite him sighed. "I agree that frequently they get out of hand. When they do, they behave more like a conflagration than an altar fire. The camp meetings, anyhow. Revivals such as this which has just closed are not quite so apt to mistake method and end. And neither the one nor the other mistakes every time." He rose from the old armchair that had been a gift to him on coming to Elderfield and took a turn in the room, pausing at the one window and looking out upon the deep blue sky above a sugar maple, a sycamore and an oak. "I will admit to you, Mr. Randall, that personally I am not

wedded to the idea of short cuts to salvation. What seems a shallow ford may sometimes turn out to be a morass. But there are clay-stiff human souls that demand, for their first stirring at any rate, a violent friction and contagion. It has been so, as I read it, through the ages. From the very times, and the times back of the times, of the God-man Jesus. The Power that patterns and controls and lifts our nature does not disdain, as perhaps you or I, Mr. Randall, might disdain, crude help for crude need. If there lack the new matches with which to make fire, it will use flint and steel; if it has not flint and steel, it will rub sticks together as does the Indian, or even borrow a brand from the brute lightning striking at random in the forest."

He came back to the armchair and the table. So I'll not apologize for the revival that's just ended, nor am I responsible for Miss Patsy Randall's bringing her great-nephew, nor for the boy's coming to feel, 'I am a sinner and would be lifted from my sins'."

"I would have him, Mr. Upjohn, lift himself from his sins."

"Perhaps, Mr. Randall, it is in the end the same thing. That remark, sir, would be misunderstood by most, but I make it to you. — Have you talked with Drury?"

"Not yet. I've sent him for the day to the woods."

"To the woods?"

"I told him to take his gun or his fishing pole as he chose, with bread and cheese and an apple turnover, and to clear out toward Cherokee Mountain. Not to be home till sunset."

Mr. Upjohn leaned back in his chair. His big hands

sought his pockets. He looked at his visitor with a smile slowly lighting a rugged countenance. As for Randall, his anger had melted away. The minister was proving, what he had always thought him, a reasonable man. The revivalist himself was gone from Elderfield. He couldn't follow him to the next benighted place. Let him hang himself in his own antics! As for Miss Patsy Randall, let her go on pushing and pulling her world into narrow graves of sectarian and passionate belief! Like Baptist, like Methodist, like Calvinist, like all the rest of them, including Maria's Episcopalians! As for Drury, he trusted he would enjoy his day in the woods and recover his balance. Shoot a turkey or bring in a string of black bass. Let very young boys live after their years and not finger and ape decisions they were not grown to!

He felt more and more tolerant toward the Reverend William Upjohn who sat regarding him, and regarding Drury spending a day with Nature, with a whimsical and understanding smile. The bookshelf was near enough for him to read the titles and he had taken advantage while the other was at the window. A considerable number met with his approval. He himself cared for books and caressed the difference between warm, worn bindings and chill, unhandled ones.

Upjohn spoke: "Your Free Thought does not somehow make me anxious about your salvation, Mr. Randall. Your procedure with Drury to-day, for instance. It is worldly wisdom, but maybe unworldly too. Let him love and use the forest — it is the Lord's. Many an opening soul has found there the first taste, and

later on hermitage and temple. And love his own natural, young life. 'There is a time to sow and a time to reap.' If the Spirit has truly breathed within him, it will continue to draw breath — and whether under this name or that, or if it began on such a day, in such a year, at such a place, under such a fostering, is earthly guessing and pride. If it be so and it is so willed, he will make when he is older his choice among tabernacles and rites here below. And there are those who to appearance use no tabernacles, or those that are invisible, and yet are conscious servants of the Breath."

With which he again lifted his big figure from the big chair. "It's all right, Mr. Randall. It usually is, though we cannot always see it so. For my own sake and for his and for the fitness of things. I trust that you will permit me to have a talk with Drury. You need not fear, I think, any dishonesty on my part."

"I don't," said Randall. "Very well! You may tackle him any time to-morrow. I'm expecting to-day to balance him. It's understood that I cannot, at his age, allow him to go off like this at a tangent. But this aside I don't in the least mind, Mr. Upjohn, if he quite lastingly feels that you're his friend."

With which he himself rose up and said good-by, for the office and the *Herald* by now were loudly calling.

· II ·

A MILE from home, across Cherokee Creek, began the big woods. First there spread bottom land, rustling with corn or made into green meadows where good cattle grazed and fine horses. Then began edge of forest. Standing under a tree, one looked back and saw meadow and waving corn and the looping creek and the little town. But a hundred feet farther and all that began to be broken as into bits of glass. Another hundred and it was all gone, departed, vanished, the eyes of the forest closed against it. Green, ancient stillness, rich with its own event, began to reign. A plenty happened in the forest, a plenty kept its attitude, a plenty broke it and moved. But one must be in sympathy. . . .

Drury had with him his gun and his hound Sawney. Their aim was Tumbling Run, which descended into Cherokee Creek as that ran into Old Cherokee River. Tumbling Run slid and cascaded, cascaded and slid, through a ravine that went on turning and turning and climbing and climbing until it lost itself in the great bulk of Cherokee Mountain. A slender, agile nation of trout inhabited Tumbling Run. Slung over his shoulder Drury carried an ancient, small satchel holding the matters that a boy of twelve was like to

want or to think he wanted on such a day in the Virginian forest. His "snack" was there wrapped in a napkin, and his shot pouch, and a fishing hook and line and a small tin box of bait. The pole he could cut anywhere with the clasp knife in his pocket. He was used enough to the woods, as were all boys in and about Elderfield. Clear out, every chance, to the swimming hole, to the big woods that to their senses were by no means pathless, to the cave in such a cliff, the dugout on the river, the abandoned iron forge, the Indian cairn on the mountain shoulder, to this enchantment or to that! Oh, they had their precious haunts! In the forest moved game that a boy could cope with; the streams never failed of fish; they went berrying in the summer and nutting in the fall. True, they traveled as a rule in such a pack as they could gather, now silent, so complete was the amity, now each member with his say. Sometimes quarrel arose and they had a fight, but the woodland was used to that also. It had seen it with red youth and manhood, and now it saw it with white. The woodland was old. Elderfield boys liked best the pack, though the pack might consist of just one and his friend. But at need they could take their errand or their pleasure alone.

Certainly home had not expressed itself as being anxious about Drury, though a whole long day and explicitly alone was unusual. Molly only exhibited curiosity; she was an extremely inquisitive child.

"Why does Father want you to go?"

"You never mind. . . . I don't just know."

"Let him alone, Molly! Your father has his reasons and you're a little young to trouble yourself with them.

— Give me a kiss, Drury, before you go. Don't you want a book?"

Mother always said, "Don't you want a book?" Drury said no, but then bethought himself and running up the stair to the minute room that was his very own possessed himself of the small Bible that had been Aunt Patsy's gift on his tenth birthday. Wrapped in a clean handkerchief it went into the bag with the snack and fishing tackle and bait can and other matters.

Now he was out of the house, with Aunt Emmeline and Molly and Ann and Jim on the back porch watching him down the long garden path between the grapevines. His chest expanded; he felt important.

He had not worked out, and he did not at present bother to work out, why he was on the road to the big woods and Tumbling Run. The customary procedure was to ask to go, not to be told by one's father. "I want you to spend a whole day by yourself in the woods. You may take your gun and Sawney. Ask Ceres to put you up a good lunch." No, it was usual to waylay a parent. "Mayn't I go hunting — or fishing — with the boys?" And nothing but grown-up occasions like picnics or barbecues meant all day long. Drury had rather intended going to Aunt Patsy's. . . . If you got religion you must keep on getting it. . . . But when his father spoke in a certain dry, positive voice, he obeyed, whatever he might privately prefer. Not that Drury had any objection to the big woods and Tumbling Run. He liked them. It was something novel to be going this way. He liked the old and he liked the new, and he liked his own company. At twelve he

did not define or contemplate his likings and dislikings as such. He experienced, pitched his tent in each experience, lifted it and was gone.

The garden ended in a four-foot wall built against the occasional rampages of Cherokee Creek. It had a gate, and the creek a footbridge. Out of the one and over the other, and through the corn and across the meadows and on to the tall column of the black gum that stood out from the woods like a sentry and in autumn towered in pure crimson. Drury dipped into the big woods.

He was twelve years and several months old. Though not yet tall, he promised to grow so. He had his thick, fine, tawny hair from his father and his deep, sea-blue eyes also from that side. He was thin-skinned and freckled; he had large well-shaped ears, a good brow and nose and a wide mouth. No one ever called him a pretty boy, yet he did not displease. He was sturdy, not loquacious, nine times out of ten independent. He was good at his books, and his mother's son enough to have a real pot of gold when it came to imagination. But just here he was shy and did not tell the tales he thought. A shock-headed, freckled boy, in old breeches and blue shirt and a straw hat the worse for wear, with a shotgun in his hand and a dog at his heels, on the path to Tumbling Run.

The path ran as narrow and winding as a serpent. Albany County inherited it, doubtless, if that is the word, from the Indians. Drury's generation yet demanded of grandfathers and great-uncles, "Tell me an Indian story!" When it was not, "Tell me a bear story!" Or maybe a wolf story. Drury himself had seen

bears in the woods though they were not of a frequency. But the Indians and the wolves were gone before he appeared.

Now in his oldest shoes he walked along. The forest, as always, took him in a net of wide peace and interest. Man or boy, one did not have to stay in a town to find life and event in multitude, and conduct to breed speculation. His fresh senses pastured.

But also there was the revival. He had been Converted and mustn't forget it.

In the excitement of departure, and in the satisfaction of being where he was and how he was, he now found that within the hour he had done that very thing. Not since the moment that he had kissed his mother good-by could he truly say that he had remembered. . . . Alas, the backslider!

Drury stopped short. Aunt Patsy seemed bodily before him — and if she faded, there stood the revivalist! Also the sough of the wind in the trees, the voices of birds and squirrels, the passage through underbrush of small beings, gave way to a confused recall of singing.

“My sins are bloody stains,
O wash them quite away!
My feet are in the ways of hell,
O lift me into day!”

Backsliding!

Drury lay down his gun, called in Sawney, who had plunged ahead after a rabbit, and threw himself down upon a mossy stone.

“I was forgetting it all. . . . Aunt Patsy. . . . Mr. Pickering, sir!” It didn't occur to him — and he

might have thought that was curious — to address Mr. Upjohn, who was the pastor and who would baptize him in Old Cherokee River if father said yes. He didn't even see him there in the yellow light and heat with the singing surging up and down, or saw him only dimly, not straight out and larger than life, like Aunt Patsy and Brother Pickering.

Backsliding! That was Aunt Patsy's great word. Not being able to Stand Fast. . . . Drury admired steadfastness.

He tried to be miserable. "Maybe I wasn't Converted. Maybe I'm denying Jesus."

A red bird whistled in a tulip tree. He observed its flash to another bough and the arrival of its mate and the conversation between the two. A tall fern brushed his shoulder. Golden bees went by him and he concluded that the gum yonder was a bee tree. Then he sighed and returned to his own uncertain state. He thought "I'll read the Bible and pray."

He did so, reading where he put in his finger:

"And I saw heaven opened and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . .

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Drury laid the Bible carefully upon the green moss and bent his young knees. "To wrestle in prayer" was another word of Aunt Patsy's and also of Brother Pickering's. "Let us wrestle in prayer —" So Drury meant to wrestle. But all that came to him was "Our

Father who art in heaven." So he said the Lord's Prayer. He was used to it; he had said it at his bedside, every night, ever since he left off "Now I lay me down to sleep." His mother had told him that it was the best of all, and enough, and then had let the matter alone. So now he said it, but not, he feared, like a wrestler.

In the revival, at the Mourners' Bench, Mr. Joe Hickory had beat his head against the floor when he prayed. Others, too, had demonstrated their thoroughness. And Drury himself had cried and wanted to love God and feared hell. Those were memorable emotions, and memorable indeed the clear blue sky of safety and joy into which he had swept when he "came through." Then the tears were different; he cried because everything was so rapturous and beautiful.

But now he could not tell, everything had so quieted down. It had been quieting down for a couple of days, even before Father came home. Supper with Aunt Patsy hadn't been what it was. . . . He found himself without much taste, after all, for going bodily, between two deacons, into Old Cherokee River and being laid under its wave by Mr. Upjohn, with a crowd of folk looking at him.

Try as he might, he could not recover the excitement, the down to the depths and up to the skies of the revival. He tried to hold on by his fingers and toes. To be a backslider, Aunt Patsy said — and Brother Pickering too — was to pitch down into hell. . . . He could be peaceful in the woods and mightily interested, but he knew what Aunt Patsy would say about that.

He sat, his feet under him, on the great flat stone. The red bird sang, the tulip tree owned ten thousand pale gold cups. An old, mighty pine rose so tall that one might see the whole world, were one up there. A silver cloud all but brushed its top; it seemed as though one might step forth upon it. The branches began far up, but the resinous, rough, aromatic bark, and a magician standing by, might help a sailor or a boy to climb. It put him to thinking of his Fairy Tale Book, that his mother had given him . . . Jack and the Beanstalk. . . . The tree went away up into a far country where dwelled the giant in his castle and the golden harp.

Sawney, up at a bound, made a dash into a laurel thicket. There followed a crashing of boughs. A stag burst from the close growth. He had great antlers and velvety eyes — he was a chieftain of the forest — for a moment he menaced the dog, then was gone with swift, strong bounds. Drury held his breath. Oh, the old Cherokee wood!

He sat still. The red bird had flown away. Sawney came back to his rest. The cloud sailed from the pine, leaving blue sky. Drury experienced something — he knew not what. It was deep, it was very quiet; it had to do with beauty and yearning and wonder. It came, it went, like a breath. It was gone. He sat still, then with a long sigh, put out his hand and opened the Bible again.

. . . "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

"Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live . . .

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

"It's a beautiful book," thought Drury. "I'll always read it." He thought, "I'll pray again," and shutting his eyes produced this time his own prayer, although at the same time it was again the Lord's Prayer.

The tulip tree lifted its cups, the pine tree towered into the sky. There grew the smallest cups imaginable in the moss upon the rock. The warm, strengthening odor of the pine filled his young nostrils, the breeze rippled against him like silken water, the red bird whistled now from a birch tree. He scrambled up with his gun and his old satchel and the Bible and resumed his way toward Tumbling Run, that was now no great distance.

· III ·

IT WAS growing toward dinner time as he could tell by the sun and a sensation within. Sawney also had a wistful eye for the knapsack. Tumbling Run, descending with a loud song, not to say a shout, yet provided once in so often a deep and still and lovely pool. In such a one Drury was fishing, having cut a pole, having found for himself a convenient ledge of rock. His string was beginning, had more than begun. At home there would be trout to-morrow for breakfast, and Father and Mother and Aunt Emmeline would say, "Well, they are beauties!"

He had been both a long time and not a long time in the big woods. Many things happened in such a place when you were by yourself. Outside things and inside things. A long string of them, dripping light. When so much happened as was the case to-day, the time was shortened. That fact just nibbled at Drury's consciousness and then was off.

He had five trout. He thought, "When I have seven I'll stop and have dinner. Then I'll catch another lot, and then I'll take a swim, and then I'll lie and think a bit, and then I'll start toward home and get that wild turkey on the way."

No better place could be than the gorge of Tumbling Run, both for feeling away and not away, lonely and

not lonely, all by one's self, in short. It was deep and filled with sound that could not be forgotten, so eternal was it. The sides rose steeply, rock and plummy trees, afar and afar to the deep blue sky. The hemlocks made a rich shade and odor. Drury caught the flight of an eagle over a cliff top.

He fished and lengthened his string that he kept cool amid mint at the edge of the Run. Trout did not bite every minute, being a shy folk in their water like crystal. Keep quiet — and keep quiet, Sawney! Sawney either went noiselessly away into the bordering trees or lay with his head between his paws, regarding his own mnemonic and imaginative realm. Another prize! Drury baited the hook and cast again. Sit very still, watch, and yet be where you would be, with Robinson Crusoe for instance, or the "Arabian Nights." . . . In Elderfield also.

Mother lay on her sofa, reading her novel. Drury, the eldest of five and living in a house that was not weak-minded, knew well enough that another brother or sister would walk in one day before long. He remembered Fitzhugh, he remembered Jim, as little babies; he remembered Ann when she was just a toddler. He thought Mother was beautiful, for all that she couldn't put on her pretty dresses. She had such dark, smiling eyes, and she carried her head so.

He transferred his thoughts to High Street. The buckeye trees, the buckeye as big as half a dozen big chestnuts put together, all glossy brown save for the lighter ring where it had nestled in the burr, and lucky now to keep in the pocket. The brick house with the swinging sign, where Father and Mr. Dick Green,

who set type, and Mr. Bob Price, who did a variety of things, and Preston McGregor, who was the printer's devil, brought out the *Albany County Herald*. Every Thursday it was born, and went in numbers, duly folded and addressed, to the post office, and to Macduffie's store and Penfield's pharmacy where it might be bought, or lay upon the long table in the printing room and subscribers stopped by for their copies. The sunlight picked out Mr. Green sorting type, and the always interesting press, and the dodgers and handbills on the walls, and Mr. Bob Price on the high stool at the high desk with a ledger before him, and Preston McGregor doing as he was told, and when he wasn't doing anything reading "Dead-shot Tom in the West" on the back doorstep.

Father, in his office, sat writing at his big desk with pigeonholes and drawers. He wrote on large-sized thin blue paper and it would be an important letter to some one of importance. Drury quite decisively felt Father's importance. "Editorially and politically important." That phrase came musically down from last year, out of the speech before the courthouse of a visiting, a complimentary-to-Elderfield orator and statesman of fame. Father writing, and the pigeonholes and drawers stuffed with bundles of papers and letters tied with red tape from the big spool. Inkwell and sand box and box of wafers; quill pens; for paper weights a piece of glittering ore and a little bronze figure of Napoleon in a cocked hat. Not that Father liked Napoleon. He said that he did not; but his mother, who was dead, had given him the paper weight. The office was ample, as the printing room was large. The floor

had matting and there were chairs for visitors, and a mighty spittoon. Upon the walls hung maps and framed documents of kinds, and a strange, big engraving that Father had brought from Europe the one solitary, dreamlike time he had been there, when he was a young man, before Drury was born, before he met Mother, before he lived in the house on Old Street, before he was an editor, before anything was settled. He had bought the picture in Rome. It showed a long series of broken arches, with curious, small, picturesque figures posturing in the foreground. A Roman aqueduct. The man who engraved it, very long ago, was named Piranesi. Drury knew intimately every small figure, and the arches dwindling into distance, and the cunningly used light and shadow. Always the whole set him to dreaming. The two windows of the office viewed the Doric pillars of the courthouse, and a buckeye tree, and Macduffie's general store. Father went on writing with a stiff pen on blue paper that crackled.

A trout bit hungrily and was landed. When he had two more he and Sawney would lay off and have dinner.

. . . It had been a long time since breakfast. He had been a long time in Old Cherokee woods. With a manner of down-draught of knowledge he recognized, "I am older." On the heels of that, as quick, as soundless, as permeative, in drew another perception. Not only was he not going to be let to leave the Presbyterian church for the Baptist, but the certainty of wishing it was fading in him. Maybe, despite Aunt Patsy, the one was as good as the other, and the other as good

as the one. . . . You could be a Christian anywhere.

The little window in his brain filmed over, but there was left an effect. And it came presently to, "I'll go see Mr. Upjohn," and that, too, was a resultant, for he had unexpectedly seen, in the same chain of happenings, that Mr. Upjohn was a wise man. Wiser than Aunt Patsy. . . . But he loved Aunt Patsy and owed her a lot.

Drury used no such words, but he dipped into a sense of restfulness and solution. He caught his fish and put by his pole. Sawney made a demonstration. "Want your dinner, hey?"

Again Sawney conveyed that he did, but immediately thereupon pricked his ears in another direction.

"Who's coming? That's nothing but the wind in the laurel and a rock rolling down."

But it seemed more than that from Sawney's depth of attention. Drury now took notice. "Somebody's coming down the side —"

Anybody who came down over loose stone and through thick growth must needs make a noise — though they said that the Indians used never to make a noise whatever the conditions. He supposed it was a man scrambling and leaping down the side of the gorge, but it turned out to be a boy.

"Hello!"

"Hello!"

"I was up on the cliff yonder because I thought there was an eagle's nest. I came over the ridge. There's a jut yonder from which I could see the Run and you fishing here. So I thought I'd come down."

"Is there an eagle's nest?"

"I couldn't find it. I'll hunt again some time."

"Where do you live?"

"At High Hill. I'm Eskridge Kerr. What's your name?"

"I'm Drury Randall."

"Is your father the editor in Elderfield?"

"Yes. The *Albany County Herald*."

"My father got the advertisement of the sale of High Hill out of it. So he came and looked at it and bought it."

"Do you like it?"

"Yes. It's a fine place. How many fish have you caught?"

Together they regarded the string in the mint bed. "I'll catch some more directly. And I'm going to shoot a wild turkey. Have you got your dinner with you?"

"No. I didn't know I was coming so far."

"Well, I've enough for us both if we don't gorge."

Fortunately Aunt Ceres in the kitchen had large ideas of a boy's appetite. . . .

They ate, seated on an outcrop of slate, Sawney with his bone at no great distance. They felt perfectly amicable and free together, two boys of an age, two hunters of the same race chance-met, two Bedouins with all things to the horizon their own. When their hunger was ended, leaving few crumbs for the fish, when they had drunk from Tumbling Run, they still squatted or sprawled upon the ledge and swapped experiences.

Young Eskridge Kerr saw the lad who has been described. Young Drury Randall saw a brown-haired, quick-eyed, rather stockily built lad with good features. The clothes he wore, though suitable enough for a

morning's exploration, didn't quite match Old Cherokee woods as did Drury's. Other things besides indicated an on the whole more urban life — urban life in Virginia being never too urban but sharing the year with the rural. Both used the cadenced, idiomatic speech developed or developing in the more southerly part of these United States. Both of them, on the mothers' side and the fathers' side, had been in Virginia — seaboard and rising land and vales among the mountains; settlement, hundred, plantation and town — since the first half of the seventeenth century. That which was brought with them from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the climate that they found, the earth and its growth and the atmosphere, the ways of living that unfolded, the neighborhood of the Indian and the neighborhood of the African, their space and time and their stars above, and all subtle influences, had built and molded them. So they camped upon the ledge lifted above Tumbling Run and learned each about the other.

"Do you go to school?"

"Yes. To Mr. Beck's school. It begins in September. Are you going?"

"I think I am. Do you like it?"

"I like part of it. You'll have to ride from High Hill. It's four miles."

"I've got a mare. Her name is Pixie. But Mr. Baliol Robertson is my cousin. Maybe I'll board with him."

"It's right much fun, the old school. Except when old Beck gets after you with his old ruler. I hope you'll go."

"I reckon I will."

"I'd better start to fishing again. There isn't but one line. If you want to, you can fish for a while. You hook one and I hook one."

"All right, I will."

Eskridge fished. Trout fishers must keep quiet. Drury, lying flat on the rock, his chin supported in his hands, regarded the companion dropped from the skies or at least from the cliff. The boys in school or out of school, as school kept — his especial set of cronies — he wasn't going back on them, not one of them! But this boy was new and different to him, just as this day was new and different. Or old and different. To-day was deep with everything that was in it. Different and the same, the same and different. Eskridge Kerr. He might go on fishing if he wanted to.

So he did. He caught five in succession. "Haven't we got enough now? I'd like to go swimming."

"The best swimming place is half a mile down."

Taking the string of trout they decamped, Sawney following. Tumbling Run rushed and slid and rested, and in a short half mile widened under a pleasant, lofty overshadowing of ancientest hemlock and arbor vitæ into a stripling pool for striplings. The half mile through they talked.

"My father says —"

"My father says —"

"I reckon I'll be an editor like him."

"I reckon I'll have High Hill. What I'd like to do would be to build railroads. Make them run here and run there."

"Hush! Hush, Sawney!"

Their winding way had brought them to the start

of a straight, sweet alley in the wood. A hundred feet ahead a flock of wild turkeys crossed from edge to edge of this parade with stately pride and leisure. Drury and his companions stood stockstill. Drury's gun came to his shoulder and there was one turkey hen the less in the wildwood. The flock scattered with whirring and dry, loud speech. Sawney bounded forward.

"Good shot! If we meet any more, let me have the gun —"

"It's a big one! Mother 'll have the fish for breakfast and the turkey for dinner. I'll keep a feather. I'm keeping a feather of everything I shoot."

"That's a good notion. I haven't shot, I reckon, as much as you. I've been a good deal just in Richmond. I've been in Baltimore too, and New York."

"Have you seen the ocean?"

"Oh, yes."

"I'd like to see that. I'd like to see the ocean."

The great bird and the string of trout rested where it was cool and shady. The two boys stripped for Tumbling Run's wide and smiling pool, wide enough to get the sun in a great shimmer and lightsomeness. The young, naked bodies poised themselves for the dive. Two years and a little more into their second decade, childhood not so far behind, first manhood not so far before, they had lads' beauty, and it is a great beauty.

They dived. The cold sweet water and the sun. Dive, swim, float, swim straight forward, on the side, on the back, tread water, plunge and splash, shout when one felt like it until the rocky sides of the gorge cast back their voices, make Sawney take his part, emerge and

sit on the ledges of rock, be sociable, swapping further accounts of themselves, then again dive and let their fair bodies shoot to the opposite side of the pool, hover, turn and reapproach.

At the end of an hour, forth they came for good and dressed. Neither possessed a watch, but they guessed well enough where the sun stood and how long it would be to supper. To Elderfield ran one way, to High Hill another, but they might keep together until they were out of Tumbling Run gorge. That was a good distance. Till they should part, Eskridge carried the gun and the string of fish.

One told about High Hill, one about Elderfield, Eskridge about the family into which birth had plunged him, and Drury the same. They matched yarns of family prowess, past and present, and of their own prowess. They mentioned their politics, which differed. "I'm a Democrat." "I'm a Whig." That aroused a slight roughening in their relations.

"Ha, I wouldn't be a Locofoco!"

"Catch me being a starched old Whig!"

But just what was Democrat and what was Whig they let slide.

So sweet was the way — though they did not say, "How sweet is the way!" — that their political discord ceased to trouble them. But presently, "I'm Episcopalian."

"I'm Presbyterian."

And then he stopped — Drury stopped.

"But Baptists," he said, after a moment, "are just as good," and stuck through life to that and to its ilk.

· IV ·

HE WAS eighteen, and in his second year at the University. His room lay in the West Range, not much removed from the one that had belonged, seventeen years or so earlier, to Edgar Allan Poe, a man of a life unfortunate and obscured, at present editing *Graham's Magazine* in Philadelphia, living as he might, and publishing strange poems and stories of which some thought well and some the reverse.

These ranges looked for all the world like cloisters. Drury, morning, noon, eve and night, heard his own footfall along the brick pavement, as it might be that of an ancient youthful lay brother, novice or monk. When he passed Number Thirteen, unless he were very preoccupied, he opened inwardly to a shadowy figure which might accompany him a few steps. He had read what the library possessed of Mr. Poe's work, and much of it haunted him and something of it wearied him. And he had been student here and had dreamed in that room of what he was going to do.

One step upward and young Drury Randall was forth from the brick arcade and in his own quarters, a room none too large nor too brightly lighted, and Spartan enough as to furniture and conveniences. A fireplace, a bed, a table, three or four chairs, an ancient wardrobe and some shelves. Certain of the

University men brought with them from plantation or town their own servant. But Drury was of the larger number who clubbed together to hire service. He owned a sixth part of a big mulatto named Alfred. Such as was his room and its situation, he loved it. He was now eighteen and halfway through the University.

Under Mr. Jefferson's Elective System, and with James Randall looking over his shoulder, he had chosen and stuck to Greek, Latin, French, Mathematics, Belles Lettres, Ancient and Modern History, Physical Geography and Philosophy. He attended the lectures of four professors.

Mr. Jefferson had planned a University of Virginia along ideas other than those which prevailed in England or elsewhere in America. The studious spirit of man must by its very nature have large freedom, even freedom to taste of all springs and find out for itself the deleterious and the wholesome. Nothing and no one but itself could determine for it and discontinue the deleterious and preserve in action the wholesome. As for man and where he began — why he began in childhood and persevered in youth. Give the youth as far as might be self-government, and let him find what was in him to find. Give him, certainly, the stated value of past experience, but be generous with "as far as may be." Trust the tree in the sapling! So the Idea of Jefferson, and so the University with its buildings that were copies from the Greek or from Roman copies of the Greek.

The saplings took leave to adorn the Idea with flourishes of their own. Liberty not infrequently changed

its name to License. For all that, perhaps in the long run the Idea worked.

Around the white-pillared and red brick great-school-to-be, in Drury's time little older than Drury himself, rolled the lovely country. Albermarle red soil, the Rivanna that is the river of Queen Anne, the village named for yet another queen, a scattering of fair plantations, much of forest, and north and south and toward the sunset the great Blue Ridge. Drury was given to long walks, sometimes with his crowd, or with one out of it, sometimes just himself, striding along. He had grown tall. He had thick, tawny hair, and blue eyes deeply set like his father's, a well-cut nose, a wide, mobile mouth. People did not say of him, "A handsome youth!" yet the field of him as he passed sent out its own tang and strength and promise. He had warmth.

He liked books and the University library spread him a table. He liked out of doors, and all his childhood had built that up for him. He liked games, but with moderation. He liked — on the whole — the Faculty; one among his professors quite especially. He liked company, but liked better solitude. At rather long intervals he went wild, playing cards for money, drinking too much, refraining from class attendance, joining in clowning hoaxes and pranks and occasionally in a rather boorish fight. The professor whom he more than liked remonstrated.

"You don't *need* to play the fool like this, Randall."

"I want to do as others do, sir."

"Well, do it, but choose your others."

"Some day perhaps I will, sir, but let's find them all out."

The instructor, sitting in a tilted chair, his hands in his pockets, regarded the student whom he in his turn liked. "Don't get into the habit of recoiling too far just because you have a notion that you'll get room for leaping. That's just forever tumbling down the mountain."

"So it is," thought Drury and pigeonholed the remark.

But despite the affection and trust that he felt for the older man, he continued at intervals to saunter backwards. He came up for penalties, and once got himself within measurable distance of expulsion.

James Randall arrived by stagecoach from Elderfield. The two walked toward the Ragged Mountains. Neither was a heated conversationalist. For some distance the father's talk was of Elderfield and Albany County and the posture of public affairs. But once and again there happened an indrawing to the center.

"I have a letter for you from your mother. One from Molly too."

"Yes, sir. I don't doubt it."

"What is this all about, Drury?"

"Well, sir, I've seen Miss Molly coquet. In my own way I've been coquetting."

"It's my belief that that is a true statement," said Randall. They walked on under bare trees. Crows were cawing in a last year's corn field. "I have lived more than twice as long as you," spoke Randall. "The thing I have observed is that life pays always in one's own coin. Look out for life's turning coquette toward you!"

"Caw — Caw — Caw!" said the crows. The heavens were a chilly blue, the accompanying stream had

edges of ice. At some distance through the woods began to ring the bell of some little country church. "I'm trying," said Randall, "to put myself in your place. It isn't so difficult as you might think, Drury. In many ways you are more like your mother than you are like me, and your mother and I, while we have always loved each other, are different folk. She is more imaginative, for one thing. But you and she and I are like enough, my son, in the huge common experience. I, too, have wandered in the big woods, hunting myself. When I say that, of course, I mean that I am yet wandering and hunting. One's self is the last game that one finds — the stag of ten. . . . One hunts through day and night, and the quarry is always ahead. . . . All the same, as one goes on one learns that the trick is to give up the inappropriate."

"It is true what you are saying," thought young Drury, but he was not yet ready, not wholly ready.

He said aloud, "I don't do these things often."

"No. I don't believe you do. But — less is often greater than more, Drury."

With that he changed the subject. "I've a good piece for this week's paper by O'Flaherty on Irish affairs and O'Connell. And I'm writing myself on Chartism."

"They say here that the *Herald* is the best paper west of the Blue Ridge."

They walked on in the not too cold, rather sunny winter day. "The Whigs are finding Tyler more democratic than they looked for. Next year they'll run, I'm thinking, Henry Clay."

"Nobody here likes their tariff."

Silence again. "Caw, caw!" said the crows. "Ding, dong, come to church!" said the little bell. Two horsemen passed them, farmers in their Sunday best. A girl in a country riding skirt sat behind one. She looked at Drury striding along. Her face was fresh and fair, sunken in a winter hood. He looked back, and the man-and-woman wind played vaguely about — a zephyr only, but acknowledging its parentage. The farmers passed with their hearty greeting, and he was again walking with his father.

"I wonder," said Drury, "how much I care for public affairs. I care, but somehow it is all different —"

"Public affairs are by no means just the running elections nor high or low tariff. A newspaper — a good newspaper — is a power that can be turned in many ways. In our country it is a growing power. It has been my hope all along that one day you'll see fit to join me in the paper, and when I'm gone succeed me."

"Thank you, Father. I know it's a field, and a starting point. . . . Since I was four and you took me to the office one day, I've always been proud of the *Albany County Herald*."

"Well, then —"

"Maybe — maybe."

Silence again. "I haven't coerced you since you were twelve," said Randall. "I don't know that I coerced you even then, but let things pass before you. I've always appealed to your reason because I believed that you had a reason to appeal to. I believe in freedom of decision and that it should begin with a man pretty early. It's the only freedom that deserves the name. Anything else is bastard. Put your views, tell your

experience, warn, persuade. But Nature places decision with the man himself. It's there, even when he decides to decide democratically or to delegate a portion of his powers. Even where he sees fit to say, 'Thy will be done.' The decision, even so, is his. Though I grant that it is an inner or clearer self that is capable of that."

He stopped to tie his shoe, seating himself on a wayside stone and continuing to rest there for a little. They had now walked three miles and more. A great oak sprang hard by and the ground was covered with acorns. Drury, throwing himself down, took up a number and let them play through his hands. "You've been good to me always, sir. I'm not really going to fail you, Father. Not about myself, and maybe not about the *Herald*. I don't quite know about that yet awhile. I'm water yet, I reckon," said Drury. "I want to run wherever I spy a channel or a chance to make one, regardless of the mill wheels, though I see the mills well enough. I want to get over the bounds somehow."

"No, I don't believe you'll fail me," said James. "This is a pretty country hereabouts, though I like our mountains and the Old Cherokee best. Well, shall we turn back? I've a man or two to see before I leave."

They walked toward the University. "Ann is not so strong as she might be this year," said Randall. "Doctor Moon is giving her bark and iron."

"Mother wrote me. I hope it will pull her up. I like Ann."

"They're all tolerable children. Jim may give us some kind of trouble, but I hope that it will pass. — As for that dreaming, novel and poetry book, music-making mother of yours, she and I are each other's

for keeps, my son. Of all things I hope that you'll find out in good time and the nick of it *the* woman. Don't cheapen, but wait."

A subtle, pure color came into Drury's cheek. He had his dream, his rising goddess whose mortal image had not yet greeted eyesight. . . .

"And don't tarnish your manhood," ended James Randall simply.

The winter day was bright, still and bright. They walked and talked, but more walking than talking, and their further talk was of nothing more intimate than Elderfield in general, the affairs of the *Herald*, and the affairs of the country. Though of course these matters and all matters are intimate, too.

And here was the University with its classic architecture.

THE rattling stagecoach brought Drury into Elderfield as it had brought so many others, since there were roads and an Elderfield and a stagecoach. The summer vacation, and he was nineteen, and life in ebullition, forming and unforming and reforming.

The stage came down Martin's Hill to Old Cherokee River. It was twilight and the lanterns of the fireflies swinging, and a dusky rose yet upon the river. Horses and wheels made the covered bridge resound. Out of the bridge, in the yet deeper dusk, the fireflies spread and spread, never still, up and down with an elfin haste, their goal and their errand without a mark. The stage went on easily through bottom land.

"Only a mile now," said Drury to Hugh Ball, who was going home with him for a month's visit.

"Does Old Eskridge live this way?"

"No. High Hill's the other side of town."

"I'm going to have a good time," said Hugh. "I feel it in my bones."

"I hope you are. — That's Linden yonder where it's lighted. The Inglesant place. They'll likely give a party."

Hugh Ball was the son of a merchant over on the Eastern Shore, where were the Chesapeake and the Atlantic Ocean and salt marshes, sand and pines, and an earth without physical elevation. Albemarle had

acquainted him with mountains, but Albany County again was different. He had an enthusiasm for the different and the novel combined with an obstinacy in staying where he was if he wished it. Cornwall was behind him on the mother's side. A wiry, swarthy young fellow, who was not going to be a village merchant like his father but an engineer. Drury liked him very well. Eskridge went back further — to a day on Tumbling Run when both were something over twelve — but there was room for all, and he found in his Inner House an excellent chamber for Hugh and gave him freedom to range. Not infrequently they met in unexpected rooms and passages, passing each other with a friendly grin or nod.

"I like parties," continued Hugh. "Shall we be asked?"

"Oh, yes! I don't like them — not much or not often, or something or other."

The road turning, the lamps of Elderfield rose before them like a cluster of magnified fireflies. The coach horn was winded, the horses, their stable so near, grew wondrously spirited. An old man and woman, their fellow travelers, straightened up. "Here we are —"

"High Street," said Drury. "There's the *Albany County Herald*, there behind the trees. — The courthouse — Macduffie's store where the Indians used to trade. — The Presbyterian church. — Yes, I like the old place. I like new places and I like old places. I don't even mean that I don't like parties — when the fiddling's good. Here's Warren's hotel. They used to say 'Tavern.' — There are Jim and Fitzhugh!"

Hugh Ball fell in eighteen-years-old love with Molly. It left Drury the more time for his own pursuits, though he had a small, hurt feeling about Hugh. "Girls!"

He said that to his mother who sat at the piano and had told him, "Hugh and Molly are down by the creek." She turned from her Mendelssohn. "Wait till you say 'Woman!' Drury."

"I say it now," said Drury. "Woman!"

"It isn't the accent," said Maria, with her charming laugh. "But you don't get it quite so young as you are! Nor Hugh, either. And Molly doesn't know how to say 'Man!' Not for a good while yet. — What are you reading, Drury?"

"'Pickwick Papers.'"

"Oh!"

The six-year old Artemisia appeared. "Mamma, may I pick raspberries?"

"Yes, with Mammy."

Ann followed Artemisia, a thirteen-year-old Ann, long-legged and thin, in dimity and pantalettes, a cat in her arms. "Mother, Catarina and I didn't mean to do it, but we broke the blue pitcher."

"Oh, what a pity!" said Maria. "You aren't usually careless."

"No, we weren't careless. I just reckon its time had come. I wept a tear and Catarina wept a tear. I'll get another if you want me to with my dollar."

"No, you needn't, if it was just an accident."

"I stubbed my toe and it went down the stairs."

"Have you taken your iron?"

"Yes." Ann and Catarina, proceeding to the old green sofa, curled themselves up with their heads on a cushion. "Play something, Mother, about Fairyland or Venice, I don't care which."

Drury decided to walk down High Street to Macduffie's and buy more shot. He and Hugh and Eskridge were going hunting to-morrow. High Street pleased him. Sun enough and shade enough, and a kind of music and rustle of old acquaintance.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot?
And days of auld lang syne —"

He met this one and that one of his acquaintance, and all wished him well. Pioneer estimates yet breathed around him. Its young men — its young women also — counted strongly in Elderfield's affections and hopes. Drury Randall and many another shooting up, and here, there and elsewhere vast America ready and waiting, tiptoe and sanguine, for the next figure in the dance.

He met Mr. Baliol Robertson, Eskridge's cousin. "Ah, Drury! Glad to see you. You're getting your height. Not so tall yet as your grandfather. Six foot four, on a great rawboned horse that he might have named Rosinante, shouting out commands on Militia Day. — I was at High Hill lately. You and Eskridge are still ancient boon companions? I've heard — no, not from Eskridge — of high jinks at the University. Innocent enough in their way, I thought, remembering. But don't go too far, Drury; no, don't go too far! Stay inside the Law. No, I don't mean the law with

a little 'I' that I practise." The elderly man and the youth walked along together. "Are you going to be an editor? Or maybe a lawyer?"

"I don't yet know, sir, what I am going to be."

"Haven't you dreams?"

"Sometimes . . . I'd like to become a wise man."

"Like Solomon, who arrived at 'Vanity of Vanity'? But of course, likewise, 'the price of Wisdom is above rubies.' So, in the end, I, too, say, 'By all means let us become wise — if we can.' Ah, here I am at my office. If you decide, young man, to read law, come and see me about it."

He met Jacob Warren who was two years his senior. "I heard you were back from the University. Fine place I hear it is. — I've got a little room all my own at the hotel, at the mulberry end of the porch. Come along and we'll have a peach brandy —"

Drury shook his head. "No. I'm for down the street."

"Drop in then some night and we'll have a hand of cards. Some whippoorwill told me you know mighty well how to play. I'll get two others and you'll educate us."

At the rack set in the broadened space before Macduffie's stood two or three saddle horses. Near by sat half a dozen men in tilted chairs, in a pleasant light and shade. They chewed tobacco and spat afar, they whittled as neat as a sailor nothings from bits of wood, they were perfectly polite to all who passed, went in or came out from Macduffie's, and saved their comment until they were out of hearing. Their talk might be political, reminiscent or other, but favored the

leisurely rather than the vivacious. It held frequent "Says I" and "Says he." "Says I, 'No, you don't, Mister! That thar tree and that boulder air on my land. That one thar and that stone's on his.' He says, says he, 'The deed don't say so.' Says I —"

Drury went into the store. "That's Editor Randall's eldest. Well growed youngster."

"Wonder if Randall's bringing him up to believe the Bible's all mixed up, just like the newspapers. Ark wasn't the ark, and whale wasn't a whale."

Inside Macduffie's, like a cool cavern, parcel-gilt, Drury bought shot. Mr. Macduffie, short, stout and rosy, in a nankeen coat, himself sold it. "I never consider myself as growing old," quoth Mr. Macduffie, "except when I take note of a youngster that I've ridden on my foot, and where he is at present. You're two thirds of the way to the ceiling."

"Even on the Fourth of July it's Christmas in here to me, Mr. Macduffie. Somebody told me that it was Kriss Kringle's land and I believed it and that you were Kriss Kringle."

Mr. Macduffie laughed and measured out and did up the shot. "You must know a lot by now! You can figure to beat the band and say off, I dessay, all the kings and queens and battles in the books."

From Macduffie's, Drury went on to the *Albany County Herald*. He might look in upon his father, though they had parted only three hours earlier. Moreover, the place itself kept for him its fascination. He knew every brick of it, every green shutter fastened back from the small, many-paned windows. The horse chestnuts arow in front were so many individuals. The

printing room, the cases and the press, every whit of the homely paraphernalia, were dear to him by association.

Mr. Dick Green was not there this morning; but Mr. Bob Price greeted him and so did Preston McGregor who had been the devil and now was apprentice and an industrious one with an eye to the heights. The present devil was a freckled boy named Crumpet, who in his turn read on the back step stories of the wild, wild, wild West.

James Randall was out. Drury stepped into the office and for a whim sat in his father's chair before the great, cumbered desk. Pigeon holes and stuffed drawers, inkwell and sand box and pens and wafers, scissors and clippings, and the bronze Napoleon-in-a-cocked-hat paper weight. "Why did Grandmother give him that?" thought Drury. "Rousseau or Voltaire or Tom Paine or Mr. Jefferson."

The buckeye leaves without one window sent in a sea-green shade and murmur; from the other he saw the white pillars of the courthouse. Law and the law and the law. Law for a new land, new law for a new land. Old-new law for an old-new land. . . . The Piranesi hanging on the wall took his eye, as it had done a thousand times. Strong light and strong shadow. A many-arched aqueduct vanishing at length from eyesight into light. Draping foliage, broken foreground and small, fantastic, dramatic figures of men. Drury lost himself, sitting motionless. On and on, the aqueduct . . .

Mr. Upjohn, the Baptist minister, having in hand a small matter of notices of meetings, tapped at the

half-open door. Drury, in abstraction, answered "Come in!" and looked up from his father's chair. The big, thoughtful, rugged-faced preacher and the youth had each his moment of adjustment.

"My father's out," said Drury. "I was sitting here a moment to look at the Piranesi. Can I do anything for you, Mr. Upjohn, or give a message?"

"No, Drury, I'll call another time." He hesitated, then, "It's a warm morning. I'll rest a minute if you'll entertain me."

He would not take the big desk chair but one of the others, and he made Drury return to the first. "I scarcely saw you last summer. You've grown."

Drury felt a seven-year door opening, a smoking of lamps in a church and a singing, urgent and wailful.

"The Son of God goes forth to war
A kingly crown to gain."

That slipped into Great-aunt Patsy's narrow porch and the morning-glories in their hundreds, white, purple, rose and blue, all dewy fresh if you caught them with the sun just over the hills. He looked at Mr. Upjohn, abstracted. The other said, "You are given to revery, are you not? Let it deepen, but keep control, and it may become contemplation. *'Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.'* Again, *'Where there is no vision the people perish.'*"

"Yes," said Drury. "That is from the Old Testament. Don't you love the arches in that picture, going on and on, and above them is, or was, water for a city full?"

"Yes, I see," said Upjohn. "An Italian engraver,

many years ago, wasn't he? I used to dream of going to Rome — by stage and ship and horseback and afoot. Now, in some quick subtle way, I am there without those means or any rising of the question of money."

The youth and the aging minister regarded each other so quietly that they did not seem apart. That occurred sometimes at the University with Drury and the professor for whom he cared, but it was older and deeper between him and Mr. Upjohn. "Yes, I understand that," said Drury.

James Randall entered the office. "I'm glad to see you, Mr. Upjohn! You're hardly here as often as I'd like. Well, Drury, you become the old desk!"

Drury, who had risen, would not wait for Mr. Upjohn, nor to talk with his father when the minister was gone. No, there was nothing he wanted, he had just been buying shot from Mr. Macduffie. Hugh? Why, Molly, the minx, had him reading "Tom Moore" aloud, down by the creek.

Outside, in the thick shade, he hesitated a moment, then took a lane which led into Willow Street, and by Miss Patsy Randall's small house and garden. He had not meant to enter at the gate, but she sat in her door with her knitting and saw him and he must.

· VI ·

DRURY's third autumn, winter, spring at the University rushed or lagged or paced at a determined speed, or on three levels did all three at once, and was as crucial as is each and every year. Growth took its set toward young manhood.

As a student he was found alike satisfactory and unsatisfactory, and both with emphasis. Where he liked the meat he devoured it with a kind of sacred rage; where he did not he knit his brows and shut his mouth and became as a dunce. The one professor maintained his attitude toward him through trade wind or doldrums; his other instructors found him, when they praised, "individual", and when they blamed "erratic." He may be said to have been unconventional in knowledge, without being epicure or daft on rarities. He was not prominent in literary or debating or other societies. Social and solitary both he might be called, but not gregarious.

Such dissipation as he had engaged in the year before lessened in spread and frequency. But when, at quite considerable intervals, he gamed he gamed higher, and when he drank he drank deeper. He was in debt. Sunk in a hollow, a little way from the village, was a house with women in it to which he had been

twice. The first time with a fellow student, the second time alone.

He remained a walker, now in company, now striding off alone, fondest of the last. There was little of the country in ten miles roundabout that he did not know. He rode, of course, as did most Virginians, and now and then he hired a horse and went farther afield, into the lovely mountains themselves or eastward toward the low horizon. As a rule he and Eskridge rode together. But most he loved walking alone.

He was fond of the night and wakefulness. One night, entering his room after a pause of five minutes in the starlight before that Number Thirteen that had sheltered Edgar Allen Poe, he lighted his lamp and sat down with pen and paper. For several years, fitfully enough, he had made verses. To-night when, two hours later, his lamp went out upon him, he had achieved poetry. His five stanzas were not an echo of Poe, or of Shelley or Wordsworth or Coleridge; they were Drury Randall's.

Long as was the journey, he went home for Christmas. Molly was growing a beauty but he liked Ann best. Jim was a curious, wild lad, with an eye on Drury and a tendency toward abrupt confidences followed by as abrupt a starting away. A colt was Jim. So far his meaning seemed to be that he meant to go West. That might be an effect of his favorite literature, or his voracity for these books an effect of a predisposition. Likely enough the last. "Plains and Indians and pushing on always," said Jim, the brothers at the time skating upon the frozen Old Cherokee.

"And then?"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Jim and skimmed aside to boys of his age.

In the house on Old Street fires burned brightly. Aunt Emmeline Mason had come to live with her sister, and being more practical than Maria, was given the housekeeping. Maria sighed with relief, and with James's Christmas present sent to Baltimore for new music and twenty novels.

Mother and son sat before the wide fireplace, the hickory back log and the oak and pine to the front burning pleasantly with a singing and coruscation. "What are you reading?"

"Shelley, mostly. Also Emerson's Essays."

"I am fathoms deep," said Maria, "in 'Les Misérables'."

She sat in a low chair — she affected no especial chair — bent forward, her hands clasped over her knee. Conventional, ladylike attitudes she varied at her will with others less so. But however she sat or stood or moved, she was graceful. A slender, rather tall, dusk-and-rose woman, showing without the wear and tear of life and motherhood, but within immortally young, forever romantic, forever musical.

"Shelley," she said. "I always loved 'The Witch of Atlas'."

"It is lovely."

The fire burned, a cricket chirped, the Christmas wind went round the house. They lapsed into silence, each sitting somewhat bent forward, hands around knees. "Drury," said Maria, "I dream a good deal about you. You children think I move aside from you, I believe, in some kind of land of my own. Maybe I

do, maybe I'm a foreigner, but lands interact and interfeel all the same. I love — even if I don't always practise it — music in a human being, all things accorded and resonant. The meaning and the beauty and the music thereof. I would like to say, Drury, that I think you know a good deal about that music, and will grow to know more."

Drury watched the fire. "I don't know. . . . I don't yet know my ocean, any more than does Tumbling Run. And maybe the ocean when it is found has its ocean."

"Yes, I see that," said Maria. "Music has its music, far, far ahead."

Emmeline Mason appeared. "Maria, did you forget to speak to Bob Kane about those turkeys?"

Eskridge was not at High Hills, but spending his Christmas in Richmond. The snow fell, the sky cleared, then clouded again with further snow. Cherokee Mountain, the hills, the big woods, vanished into mere whiteness. Drury put on boots, an old great coat and an ancient slouch hat and went walking, down through the snow-choked garden, over the creek, across the silvered fields and meadows, on the old path that led to the woods and the mountain side. The air was still, it was not cold, though the snow continually fell. He met no one; most things and beings were folded in on such a day. He loved it; his soul seemed to be in a great cradle, swinging slow, swinging wide.

When he came to the woods he walked there too. Oak and ash and thorn, birch and beech, tulip, linden, hickory, gum and sycamore, pine and hemlock and all others, they were his familiars. The snow lay along

the naked boughs and the clothed boughs. The snow fell in large flakes but now with a luminousness overhead that meant that the sun was on his job, though veils were yet drawn between him and human perceptions. The great sun, the prevailing snow, the silent trees — the silent trees, the lessening snow, the light from gray becoming pearl, from pearl lightening and coloring into opal. The sound of Tumbling Run that was so swift it could not harden.

Another week and he was again at the University. Invited to do so, he entered one evening the small, old-fashioned, book-lined study of the professor whom he liked. The two sat beside a fire with books around them.

"You had a good Christmas?"

"Yes, I think so. . . . I begin to see, sir, how everything counts."

"Pythagorean Number," said the professor.

"I had a long talk with my father. I'm going, when I finish here, to cast my lot with him and the *Herald*. Editorship; that's the trade that opens. It calls about as loudly as anything else."

"Trades — or professions — are what you make them. Hole in the wall or a springboard."

"I don't dislike it," said Drury. "I rather like it. . . . I'd prefer to have a magazine to edit and maybe to write in. . . . But beggars must not be choosers."

"It might lead —" said the professor tentatively.

"Yes. A springboard as you say, sir. But to what?"

He was silent, his young, rather remarkable face set in his hands, his eyes upon the fire.

His friend, thirty years his elder, spoke. "This country of ours has above twenty-five million people. The Irish stream in, the English, German, Scandinavian and so on. The great European affluent. This land is like an earth itself, it is so vast. Between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean what silent spaces! It has hardly begun. Where will it end? How many shall we house? In the North, mills and machines increase. I see manufacture and manufacture, and it is going to spread. How deep will it spread and how far? All over, perhaps. And railroads. And canals, high-roads, travel. Not pioneering, but travel to and fro, on concerns that we can't just image. Inventions now. I think that we are an inventive people. God knows what we have got up our sleeve! Engineering is beginning to march. Speaking generally, Science will profit by us and we by Science. God knows what its road is, either!" He stooped to the fire and knocking the ashes from his pipe refilled and lighted it. "What are we going to do politically? Continue in, and introduce? Especially introduce. In long time and in short time. To speak of the latter, there are for instance Free Soil and the Rights of the Slaveholder. What do you think is coming out of that pot? What do you think is going to happen to Africa in America, or to America because Africa is in it? Short time and long time? There is the way we think below Mason and Dixon, and the way New England thinks, and New York and Pennsylvania, to say nothing of the way these new States, Arkansas and Michigan, and presently Wisconsin and Iowa and others are going to think. Before we're much

older every man jack of our Territories will celebrate being a State. What is the West — some day or other — going to think? All the problems. Solve a sum and another jumps out upon the slate.” He smoked. “How are we going to think when we are so big and full a country that maybe we’ll overshadow even Great Britain? How are we going to link on with the rest of the world? There’s a rest of the world; we aren’t alone the Great It, but we’ll have to be taken into account. We’re large. It rests to see if we’re large and deep, if we’re just a monstrous pond or the ocean with its salt. Then there’s our religiousness. We’ve all kinds and cuts of religious bodies, fifty orthodox and a hundred little creeds swimming all by themselves. Mormons and Millerites and God knows His own! Every one ready to say to every one else, “Thou betrayest!” . . . Are we ever going to know a symbol or an allegory when we meet it in the road? And what is going to happen when we do say, ‘They are symbols and allegories’? What is going to happen, I ask you, when we begin to know ourselves? What is going to happen in America? — Then there’s the æsthetic domain. Beauty. ‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty.’ Who is going to train the miraculous rose and graft the grapes of Eshcol?”

He put down his pipe and stood up beneath Raphael’s “School of Athens.” — “Wisdom. What is going to be our wisdom? Every country has its wisdom, and the Whole has its wisdom. You young men and women and your children and your children’s children, — what shall you see and know and be? What, Drury,

shall become? 'Become that which thou art,' said the ancient wise man — but how long a road will that be?"

Outside the professor's comely, pillared house, on the way to his own room, Drury saw the winter stars, of a multitude, a magnificence and a silence. It rang with him as his own footfall, "*Become that which thou art. Become that which thou art. — Who is going to train the miraculous rose and graft the grapes of Eshcol?*"

· VII ·

IT WAS summer and he was a graduate and through with the University — outwardly; he would never be through with it inwardly, and of course that might lead in the flow of time and occasion to “outwardly” again in some other or further fashion. He was not to go at once to Elderfield but with Hugh Ball to the Eastern Shore. In August he would return to Elderfield and begin in company with his father to live for and by the *Albany County Herald*.

Said Hugh, “My father’s a merchant in a small way in a place hardly more than a hamlet. He and my mother are plain, old-fashioned folk, of a farming stock. We live simply though comfortably. Our people are respected and that’s all.”

“What are you talking about, Hugh?” said Drury. “I am going with you, and to stay with and like your people. And I’m going to see the ocean, touch it, walk by it, sail upon it!”

Hugh looked at him. “I believe that is the way you do take it all. The Democrat.”

They traveled first to Richmond, spending a week there with friends in a fair brick mansion with a bowery garden. The capital city — twenty-five thousand folk, perhaps, white and black — stretched pleasantly and leisurely up and down and over its

hills and vales. The trees and gardens were many, the wide James more than murmured by, its falls and islets entertained. Below the town rode at anchor sea-going craft. Drury saw here with the eyes of this life his first ships. The ships, of no enormous tonnage, brought cargoes of kinds and departed laden for the most part with tobacco. A faint, dry, not unpleasant fragrance of that weed often breathed through the town. Out of greenery rose Jefferson's white-pillared Capitol. There were churches, hotels, academies, seminaries and dancing schools, a theater, the Athenæum, newspapers and the *Southern Literary Messenger*. The society was esteemed very good; emphatically amiable and not lacking strength and tang. The town had citizens of more than local note. It grew and grew, as all things in America grew, America growing like Jack's beanstalk.

Drury had letters from his father to the editors of the *Enquirer* and the *Whig* and the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He presented them, the country cousin come to town; the more than that, the mountain cousin from a relatively far region, a Cohee come east to the Tuckahoes. But James Randall's paper was known for an important organ in its own division of the great State. James himself had political weight and was acquainted here. Richmond had met him on her streets and in her public buildings and her private houses. His son found that it might be pleasant enough and profitable enough to rest in Richmond for more than a week, for even a month. When Hugh saw the way things might go, he offered to release his friend. But Drury shook his head. "For what do you take me?"

I'll come here again. But now I'm for you and the sea and the Eastern Shore."

He was happy on the boat going down the river, watching the pleasant shores pass and the amusing life of the infrequent, long, slim landings at which the boat tarried its few minutes. This life, this folk, differed from that to which he was accustomed. The historic stream affected him like a narrative, an epic. He sat in the prow, absorbed. An inner sense watched seventeenth-century, eighteenth-century sailing ships and Indian canoes. He saw old, small, high-built sailing ships packed with colonists, his own forbears among them; he saw merchant ships and slavers and pirate craft. Old England came up the amber flood, a mother settling and a mother fighting her brood. He saw a few small French ships — he had in his ancestry the Huguenot also — and later French ships, bringing Lafayette and Rochambeau. The river was full and wide, wide. On its shores yet stood, so long, and long after the first coming, much of ancient forest. When they passed Jamestown he rose and stood by the rail in a dream.

Quitting the boat at Norfolk, they stayed the night in an old tavern, then in the morning, upon another craft, crossed Chesapeake. Now was the width of waters and the salt sea, the tang and the freshness, the sea birds and the larger dream. They crossed the mighty bay and here at last was the peninsula between it and the open Atlantic, the two counties, Northhampton and Accomac, that together made the Eastern Shore.

Hugh and Drury left the boat at an ancient landing where they found waiting an old phaëton with two

strong horses and a negro driver. Entering it, they drove and drove over a sandy road, between cultivated fields with glimpses of plantation houses and negro quarters, and pine trees and pine trees and pine trees. The ocean was not to be seen or heard, but the sandy, flat land and the great arch of the sky and the taste and perfume of the air proclaimed him. They drove for a couple of hours straight up the peninsula, then turned into a narrower, eastward-trending road, and so came at last to a double handful of houses, brick and frame, grown up long ago at a crossroads, back of a manner of haven that had never become of any but a casual use and importance. "There is the water," said Hugh. It lay beyond the houses, mirror smooth and vast. "But not clear ocean yet. There's the old fringe of islands up and down the coast. We'll cross one day soon to Outermost, that's over against us. When we're there, when you look east, you look to Morocco."

"To Morocco —"

They drove through the hamlet. "That's our little old church — that's the tavern — here's my father's store. Shall we get out and say 'How d'ye do' to him?"

That they did. The elder Ball proved a short, quiet-eyed, humorous man with graying hair and slow speech, well mannered and spoken in a country fashion. His gift was a quiet and steady acquisitiveness that had built his trade and bought his house when it slipped from less cautious fingers, and sent his only son to Academy and University. If he had little education other than the not unimportant one that life had given him, Hugh had the more. The father and son met

with a tranquil affection, after which Drury had his hand-shaking.

"You're very welcome," said the merchant. "'Tis a mortal quiet country, but young fellows can always set something going! At the worst there's always a boat and a sail and a fishing."

They resumed their seats in the phaëton. Out of the tiny place and a half a mile beyond, and here stood the old frame house with its own land that was now Mr. Ball's. Cedars and the omnipresent pine overshadowed it; roses bloomed; on an ancient, shaped doorstone waited Mrs. Ball, ample and motherly, to greet them.

Drury's room was in the gable that gave east. Here at his window, at sunset, he stood and smelled the salt marshes and saw soft sea-gleam, blue under blue. The next morning at dawn he waked himself, as he could do, dressed and stole down the stair and out of the house. Dawn and sunrise and mother sea.

He had spent a fortnight with Hugh and his folk and Hugh's catboat, *Happy Day*, when the time came for going to Outermost. He had been happy, the mountain bred, finding that the sea also was his heritage.

"I don't know that I could be happier," he said to Hugh.

"Oh, I suppose we always could," answered the other philosophically. He sat in the bow watching Drury, whom he was teaching to handle the boat. The pupil had proved apt and delighted to learn. "I'll sail it many a time, walking along Elderfield High Street."

"I've been planning," said Hugh. "Let's stay a week on Outermost."

"Anywhere," answered Drury. "Though I'm perfectly happy here, Hugh. Don't you know it?"

"You're all right," said Hugh. "I shouldn't have picked you if you weren't. Well, Outermost —"

"Where would we stay?"

"There's a man on it — Jerry White — with a quite decently comfortable house. He and his wife would take us. There's a small old lighthouse and a coast guard. A wreck's exciting, but it won't happen in bright weather. I was there once as a boy when it did happen. And there's Captain Gilbert."

"Who is he?"

"He had a ship. He's very old now. Twenty years ago he bought ten acres and built a house that looks as though it had been on Outermost forever. He lives there with two sisters. Now and then some of his kin from the mainland come to visit him."

"What day are we going?"

"Thursday, I thought."

On that day half a morning's sail with a light wind brought them to Outermost, that was a small, small island edged out a bit from the file of islands up and down the coast. Old Captain Gilbert with his glass picked them out as they approached the small, old gray landing. "That's Tom Ball's son's boat."

Miss Sarah, ten years his junior, tall and straight and young for her age, paused beside him. "Let me look, David. Yes, it's Hugh Ball and somebody with him — I reckon that schoolfellow Jinny Outerbridge said in her letter was coming to visit him."

Miss Hannah, ten years her half-sister's junior, tall and straight and young for her age, appeared from the back of the house. "Will White has brought the fish, Sarah. He says Hugh Ball and his friend are going to stay with them."

A girl of nineteen in an old print dress and a wide straw hat came from the road that led to the sea. "At what are you looking, Cousin David?"

"At Hugh Ball's boat — Aye, now, they've landed."

· VIII ·

OUTERMOST, that was several miles long and a little narrower, with soil and sand and beaches where the sea threw delicate shells, with short sweet grass where the earth would take it and a longer, waving dune grass and wind-twisted infrequent trees, with a four-league wide water on its western side and on its eastern the free ocean running endlessly — Outermost became to young Drury Randall a place spellbound forever. Spellbound and free, and if that was paradox, entertain the paradox and find compatibility.

There stood the squat old lighthouse with the squat log building that housed the tender of the light and a lifeboat. In two or three neighboring small, white-washed houses lived with their families the Outermost men who were sworn for coast guards. They likewise fished and were duck hunters. Jerry White's house stood in mid-island on the slightest rise of ground imaginable. It was the Whites who, three generations earlier, in the old eighteenth century, had somehow acquired Outermost. They sold a slice of it to the Lambs, and later on another to the Outerbridges. The children of these three names grew up and intermarried, or sometimes married with the mainland. If the latter were women they betook themselves thither; if they were men their brides came to Outermost.

One December storm long ago, Captain David Gilbert of the *Merry Star* found himself driven upon a sand bar and held there for a furious sea to beat to pieces. The lighthouse twinkled but it could not rescue when the harm had been done. But the Outermost men and their lifeboat put forth, and Captain, mates and crew all were saved. Even the *Merry Star* somehow survived, though with her wounds, to be sure. While all were mending, Captain David had time to survey the island and to take a fancy. Years later, when he felt age creeping upon him and left material ships to younger men, the fancy proved itself intact and alive. He sailed to Outermost and bargained with Jerry White. Ten acres, and he pointed them out at the blunt northern end of the island, where the sea and the sound alike were commanded, where the grass grew firm and sweet with soil that would allow a garden and the beach was just rightly sloping and fair for bathing. "For I shall keep house with two sisters, Sarah and Hannah," quoth Captain David.

Jerry sold the ten, for even on Outermost was need of silver dollars, and purchasers were few and far between. Indeed, when the Captain's ten were told off, there was not left any especial land to sell, no one buying just shell-strewn beach or landward-lying marshes. Captain Gilbert brought workmen from the mainland and built his house, and it was of logs, white-washed, long and low, a story and a half, ample enough for an old sea captain. Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah arrived from a Northern Neck county. Twenty years ago was all this from the day of the arrival of Hugh Ball and Drury Randall. The population of Outer-

most now might stand at forty souls, men, women and children. The mass of it dwelled at the southern end, Jerry White about the middle and Captain Gilbert in the north. In the nature of the space no part of the forty could be far from the other parts. Yet in its nature, too, with the sea and the sky and with dunes and stunted trees intervening between here and there, solitude might be perfectly experienced on Outermost.

Along the western side stretched more or less of shoal and marsh. High tide lessened their extent; low tide allowed a larger kingdom. Sea canals wound among the marshes; a boat going that way tacked like a snake. In the summer the marshes were richly green; autumn and winter they became tawny; sunset and sunrise the waters among them burned carmine, pale gold and purple. Gulls, marsh hens, ducks, cranes and what not had here their *pied-à-terre*.

On the eastern side a long strip of gray-white sand faced an ocean ultimate and lonely.

The fishing was admirable, the sailing, the bathing. In the *Happy Day* Drury and Hugh fished as the tide served and brought in spot, sea trout and flounder. They sailed around the island and around again. They plunged naked through the white combers and swam beyond them. Salt and freshness and immortal vigor of the sea. Out the two came and lay upon the sand while the sea dried them; then dressed and returned with mighty appetites to Jerry White's, talking and laughing or happily silent as they went. Each felt contentment with this life and with comradeship. The latter always proved compatible with agreed-upon or unex-

pected absences and self-accompanyings. Hugh might go or stay alone and so might Drury.

Their fourth morning Drury found himself so and upon the beach. It was early; he was making a collection of shells for Ann. He walked now with his eyes upon the sand, now watching only the sea. Across there Morocco. Spain — Morocco. . . . All the shores and the ocean between. . . . All the ships on all the seas, all the errands. He did not think; he saw with a vision inner and raised. He sat down and with his knees lifted and his hands locked about them, his shells beside him in a large handkerchief, he gazed, abstracted.

The sun that had been under the horizon when he started out pushed a golden rim above the green water. He faced it until it had cleared the sea, then walked again, going toward the northern end of Outermost. A thousand leagues — a globe of water. . . . Sails spread all white in sunlight. Sails furled under a black sky. Ships wrecked and ships in haven. . . . The seas and isles of palm. The song of the sea and of ships. . . . Diapason.

The sun made the sands to shine. The beach curved like a sickle. Turning with it he saw a woman coming toward him. As the distance between them lessened, he perceived that she, too, was young, — a year and something over younger than himself. She wore an old dim blue dress with a round collar of worked muslin and a woolen jacket that had seen better days. Her head was bare, her form very light and moving always so lightly that it gave her a seeming of being carried by the morning wind that was freshening from the sea.

They approached each other more closely and he saw that she was crowned with braids of dark hair, that her face was browned as if she were forever out of doors, that her eyes were dark and unusual in shape and set far apart. No, she was not beautiful, thought Drury, but in another moment saw that she was so. She moved as lightly as thistledown, yet she was not thistledown. Everything about her flickered, yet the flame was not going out. She had her hands in the pockets of her jacket — she seemed to belong to the island, yet not more so than to the sea and the sky, and to something that was not one of these though it might flicker within them constantly.

They were now near together. She spoke first. "Good morning!" and her voice was light, high and sweet, like a flute, thought Drury. Pipe of Pan — flute of Krishna.

"Good morning!"

She stood still, a little above him where the sand was ridged. "Are you Hugh Ball?"

"No. I am Drury Randall."

"I knew that you were one of them. There are so few on this island that we talk about visitors at once and often. Do you like it here?"

"I like it more almost than I've ever liked anything. I had never seen the ocean."

With that they both turned and gazed upon it. In a moment she was speaking again. "How long are you staying?"

"We came for a week, but we think we'll make it ten days. I've been here four days . . . and this morning."

"My name is Rachael Gilbert. I'm Captain Gilbert's cousin. I was born on the mainland but I haven't but a little money and my parents are dead. So they take me here in the summer and I help Cousin Sarah and Cousin Hannah. I love it. I came here first when I was a child. I love Outermost."

"So do I. . . . I saw this morning, sitting here, that it was mine . . . mine, mine!"

"You have shells in your handkerchief. Cousin David says that there are but homely things on such a beach as this, and he truly has wonderful ones upon the mantel and the what-not in the parlor. He used to bring them, when he sailed and sailed about the world, to Cousin Sarah and Cousin Hannah. He says there are no rarities here, but I like them all the same — and they are ours — Outermost's! They are the sea's gifts and we must take them as they are meant."

As she spoke she stooped and picked from where it lay half covered by the sand a delicate, rayed, ivory and rose shell.

"This is rather rare here."

"May I have it?"

"Indeed you may."

As she gave it, she seemed to look at him, really and truly, for the first time. Her eyes widened a little, a faint flush came to her tanned cheek. As the shell changed hands, the hands touched and lingered an imperceptible moment before they felt apart.

"Ah!" she said, then, "For whom are you getting them?"

"For my sister Ann. But this one I'll keep for myself." He spoke without gallantry and she answered

without coquetry. "Yes, if you like it. Now I must be going back. I come out like this before breakfast because I love it so. Before you sail away come and see us."

"That I will. That I will. Mayn't I walk with you now?"

"Oh, yes, if you like."

They moved northward. The sea, the land, the air glistered. Each felt a faint sweet thrilling through their bodies and their souls. They walked in silence except when, self-consciousness descending upon them, they spoke abruptly of casual things. The next minute it lifted and silence reëntered, exquisitely doubled, unitary, at peace. The house appeared before them, whitewashed log, long and low, plain and sweet, with two great outside chimneys and a feather of smoke, and before the whole a ribbon of flowers such as grew upon Outermost.

"Will you come in and have breakfast with us?"

"No, I cannot. But when shall I see you again?"

"When you come to see us. I am here, I am always here, unless I am on the beach, and then they blow the horn for me." She laughed, a light, silver, thrilling laugh. By now everything she did was magic to him.

"If you should come out before breakfast and I should come out before breakfast —"

"Oh, if we meet, we'll hunt for shells together —" Again she laughed and he laughed with her. Both felt a manner of intoxication, light and fine and honey-sweet. Both might have said, "I have found, I have found, not a shell, but life . . . *'I am come that ye may have life and have it more abundantly'.*"

"Then sunrise — "

"Sunrise."

With that they heard the horn blown. "I am late!" she said and with a gesture as of putting him from her, she turned and ran. She ran like a nymph of the shore, out of a Greek tale. The house closed upon her. Drury stood in his tracks, gazing at a habitation enchanted, raying out light, trembling with music.

Back upon the beach, the house hidden by dune and twisted trees, he threw himself down and lay very still by the sounding sea, in the early sunshine. Rising at last, he moved toward Jerry White's, but before he reached it took once more his seat upon the sand, his handkerchief of shells beside him and his large, strong hands locked about his raised knees. He sat and faced the ocean and the climbing sun as he had done an hour before, but in that time the door of thrilling difference had opened wide. He sat very still, his blue eyes on the sea, the morning wind lifting his hair, in his face a strange, tender, deep look. After a time he moved slightly, unlocked his hands and began to write upon the sand. "I drink no more to any the least excess. I game no more, nor live loosely any more. Drury Randall." He smoothed it away with his hand and again faced the great sea. The tide was coming in. Rachael! Rachael! he heard it say.

· IX ·

THEY made the first visit, Drury and Hugh together, late that afternoon. Captain Gilbert was glad to see them, and Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah. But Rachael was not there; she was not there; she was out in the boat, with Will White, the thirteen-year-old retainer of the Gilberts. Miss Sarah invited them to supper the next evening.

At Jerry White's, Drury waked at three in the morning and lay waiting for something like dawn to begin. With the first lightening of the east over the water he rose, dressed and slipped away. An hour upon the beach alone, then with the sun she was there, walking so lightly with the waving light about her and the wonder. . . . They paced the sand together, then sat in the golden light, in the curve of a dune. They made their exchanges; she laid before him like a treasure from the sea all that she could of her simple, clear, profound enough life, what she felt and how she thought about things, and her idea of it all. In his turn Drury told of his life, of Elderfield and his kin, of how he felt and thought about things. Each became and remained of endless interest to the other. They walked again, the hour went by. She touched his hand and said good-by in that pure, vibrating, musical voice.

At noon Drury and Hugh came from bathing, swim-

ming, playing in the green sea and lay in the sun and wind. "Only two more days," said Hugh, the sand running between his hands.

"Hugh — "

"Yes?"

He had to propose, had Drury, that he be left upon Outermost. For a week or maybe ten days. If Hugh also could stay that would be fine.

"I can't," said Hugh. "Those cousins are coming, you know. Mother would never forgive me. I don't know that she'll forgive you either. — What is it?"

"I won't tell you now," said Drury. "Wait a little — wait until to-morrow. It isn't anyhow, old Hugh, that we've fallen out or ever will fall out, or that I wasn't quite blissful with you and your people. It seems to me that I owe the Eastern Shore more than I could tell in a thousand years — "

He got up abruptly and moved naked to the sea edge. Hugh, rising on his elbow, marked him there, the young man naked, fair and strong in the direct light. "What's happened anyhow? I see now he has been different since yesterday."

Shortly before sunset they came to Captain Gilbert's white house. . . . It was a little after nine when they said good night to all and strode back to Jerry White's under the summer stars. At first they walked in silence, then said Hugh, "All right, Drury! I make out, I reckon, why you want to stay. — I don't know how or where or when you've met before."

"Yesterday at sunrise I was on the beach, walking toward that end of the island. She also was out by the sea. I met her. We stood and talked and I walked with

her to the house. Again this morning I was there and she was there."

"And — ?"

"And I want to stay, Hugh. — Poets tell the simple truth. So does music."

"All right," said Hugh. "I suppose one day I'll comprehend it."

Three mornings later Hugh, in the *Happy Day*, was gone. Drury stayed. Now each sunrise by the sea he waited for Rachael, who came each sunrise, light and swift over the gleaming sand. For an hour they were together, walking the beach or sitting in the curve of a dune. He told her all things and she told him all things. Then she went fleet and light back to the house and he dwelled alone with magic. In the course of the day he paid a visit — sometimes he paid two — to the house and family of Captain Gilbert. A good long visit, and deep blue eyes at the service as wholly as might be of the youngest there.

Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah, in the isolation of their own room, had their say. "It's no use speaking to Brother."

"No, not yet. When we do — or when that young man does — he'll just agree. That's all he does nowadays, just sits there by his old glass and agrees."

"The young man's very likable. He ain't shallow water. Jerry White says he'll have a good living on his father's newspaper. Maybe Jinny Outerbridge could get us a copy of it. There's a lot of things it might tell us. It's mortal far to they mountains."

"Do you reckon he's spoken to Rachael?"

"I don't know. She ain't shallow water neither. I

never can see way through her, though when she smiles one'd think she was just the Scriptures' Sea of Glass."

"'Tis likely they know whether he's spoke or not."

"Yes, I reckon that's so."

"Well, I wish her well. She's a good child for all she's kind of unearthly. . . . She's got health, yet I've never felt somehow that she'd stay down here to be old. But, life and death, she's one of the forever kinds."

"Yes, I've had that feeling too —"

After further discourse they went to sleep, the two maiden ladies, each with her chin in her hand. Captain Gilbert slept in his shipshape small room, sleeping lightly as do the aged, with their dreams more vision than dream. The *Merry Star* was there and her captain and her crew, and they all dealt genially and intimately with the sweet, familiar sea. Will White slept like a dormouse in the cuddy off the stair. The clean, simple house slept with the moonbeams all around it, silvering the few trees and the garden growth, making ivory of the sand. Rachael slept and waked and stepped from her bed at dawn. The tide was making, the sea at its chant.

How sweet to meet — how sweet to meet in the rose light, in the immortal freshness!

He returned with her to the Gilberts, to breakfast. They were all so simple, so early rising, so candid in their awareness and so well-mannered that it might have been Arcady.

That afternoon Rachael and Drury took the Captain's small boat, the *Star*, and went around the island. She could sail such a craft as skilfully as any, and by now Drury was not far behind. The air, the sky, the

light swung with them in an ineffable, ringing peace. Afar on the eastern horizon they marked one after the other four full-sailed vessels sailing, sailing, to South America. Round their isle they went in their own bliss.

Said Drury: "We are in a ship together, a little ship and a great ship, and we the passengers and somehow the ship as well."

She began to sing in a sweet, true voice scraps of old songs. She did this when she sailed the boat alone or with Will White, and found it natural to do it now, Rachael being Drury, and Drury, Rachael. He listened in a trance or in a wondrous waking. It was Thomas the Rhymer and the Fairy Queen; it was human lovers and all that that had meant, would mean; it was Rachael Gilbert and Drury Randall, it was Rachael-and-Drury — all in one word. More than that, one Word, one Word only. **THE WORD.**

The *Star* returned to the wharf. It was a little landing belonging to the Captain. They lowered the sail, drew in to the gray boards resting upon green-painted piles, fastened the boat to her ring. None but themselves were at the place; in the serene light the island attended to its own affairs and left them to theirs. Drury sprang out and gave her his hand; so light, so deft, she was beside him in a moment.

They turned their faces toward the Captain's but there had been placed a bench for any who waited for the *Star*, and after one moment of hesitation they took their seat. A rich light hung in the west, coloring the liquid miles between Outermost and the main of the Eastern Shore. The marshes were emerald and the winding channels in and out fairy ribbons. The white

gulls rose, descended, hung, swooped. Two or three boats returning with their catch to the southern landing glistened and gleamed as the sun threw the last arrows in that day's quiver. Turn the head and across the slight bulk of the island behold the mighty ocean, behold it and hear its voice.

Magic wrapped them both. Each saw in the other the Desirable, the Beautiful. They sat in a silence fulfilled with utterance, with cries of prayer and praise. Then said Drury, "Rachael — "

"Drury, Drury!"

They were in each other's arms.

Captain Gilbert's house thought they were delayed in returning. The Captain turned his glass — it having an offshoot of its own from his room whence from three small windows he could observe most things — turned his glass and found the *Star*. "They're in, Sarah." He sat in his heavy old chair, with his silver hair and beard, his sunken pale-blue eyes and his veinous hands. "They're sitting there on the landing. Ha!" said the old sea captain and left the glass.

With the sunset there entered the betrothed pair. Rachael went with her lightness as of a winged being to her own room. Drury approached her cousin, the sea captain, the head of the house, and sitting down, began to speak earnestly.

TWENTY-TWO and twenty-one were not young for marriage in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. They were married, Drury and Rachael, one year after that meeting at sunrise on the beach of Outermost, married on the island, in Captain Gilbert's parlor, by an Outerbridge who was likewise a minister. James Randall, with Ann, for whom the change and the sea air would be good, had come from Elderfield and Hugh Ball was Drury's groomsman. They all stayed with Jerry White. The island — Whites and Lambs and Outerbridges — took interest. Maybe good earth and marsh and dune, sea and air and azure sky were not without it, either.

Ann would be Rachael's bridesmaid, in a pale, pale pink muslin with flowing sleeves and a silver sash. Ann had her mother's dark eyes and her father's thick, light-brown hair, and a thin, intelligent face.

They were on Outermost a week almost before the wedding and she and Rachael grew acquainted. "I like your name — Rachael."

"Ann is a dear name too. Drury cares a deal for you."

"I've always been delicate. They're as good as good can be to me, but Drury and I *understand* each other. Molly, however, is the beautiful one."

"Often and often, walking by myself, I have heard

all your names and I have seen your ways. And your letters have been just kindness."

"Oh, we are kind, I believe! One thing I knew just as soon as I saw you and that is that you and Mother will *do* together. That's because of Imagination."

"Cousin David has given me twenty lovely sea shells. Look! I want you to have them for your glass case."

The two were in Rachael's room, a clean, uncluttered, simple place, yet without bareness. It was like a shell for the perpetual sound of the ocean, and the salt air and clear light went through it in their own tides. "I didn't know how wonderful is the sea," said Ann, taking up and putting down one after another the West Indian shells.

"I love it. But I have never yet seen mountains."

James Randall liked after his own way and was liked in that sort on Outermost. He had a power of just valuation, and the Gilberts passed. "Though I thought of Drury marrying in his own section and into a country family in the old sense, marrying name and connection, land and slaves . . . As he has always done, he disappoints and does not disappoint."

He often sat, James Randall, with that ancient mariner, Captain David Gilbert, who could tell strange stories and as yet without rambling, keeping for all his age a shrewd mind. Ann and Hugh Ball would be somewhere together. Drury and Rachael. Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah moved about the house or sat piecing a quilt and knitting a stocking. The Captain ended an outlandish tale. "But as for the *Merry Star*, we had peace."

"I suppose to you the very earth is like a ship."

"You can look at it that way."

They sat quietly together, the very old man and the middle-aged man, in the door of the Captain's room that opened straight upon the shell-bordered small garden. "See yonder flight of cranes —"

They watched until the limpid sky was again unflecked. Randall began to talk of Drury. "He's taking hold of the paper well. He's got intellectual power. It doesn't reason like mine; it seems to cut through. Our conclusions aren't always the same. But I've got the grace to see that at times his is the longer view. I don't see it always, and I've never been one to give way for the sake of giving way. I don't look at myself, though, as an obstinate man. And he's generously minded — Drury. I don't feel that he is out for the main chance. Too many of our people are; north, south, east, west. I make a living, but I never have served for lucre first. Neither will he. But I have sometimes a wonder as to how he is going to develop. I feel something that I don't know that I'll be able to keep pace with — though I'll try!"

He fell silent, his hands in his pockets. "I never had any children, wife nor children," said the old Captain in his voice remote and serene. "But I take an interest. I've seen that there ain't any manner of doubt about your son and Rachael loving each other. That's the main thing. Fair weather and foul, ebb and flow, quarrel and make up."

"It has been so with his mother and myself. Fair weather and foul. Great differences in the way we're put together. But all the same —"

"Anchored each in each and sailing each in each," said the old man. "Aye."

Drury and Rachael were heard approaching. Again they had been around the island in the *Star*.

Ann and Hugh sat on the steps before the minute lighthouse and looked out to the surf breaking on the bar and listened to the sweet, melancholy ringing of the bell buoy. "Oh, it's different from Elderfield!"

"I love Elderfield. You were all so good to me that summer."

"Molly and you down by the creek, reading 'Lalla Rookh'."

"You hadn't put that wonderful hair up, three years ago. I remember you in long braids, with your cat."

"Catarina died last year. I wept."

"Do you often weep?"

"No. I am not that kind. But I might — I might weep."

"Why?"

"Not for the long run, maybe. But I don't believe I'll live. Not this side of the sun."

"Why shouldn't you live? Drury says you are stronger. I want you to live, Ann."

"Maybe I will, maybe I will. — Ding, dong, ding, dong. Isn't it sweet out there — and lonely?"

The wedding day came near, would be to-morrow. Rachael and Drury walked in the afternoon light upon the beach.

"Life together."

"Life together."

When they had walked a mile they rested, seated

upon the ridged sand. Far off a full-sailed, rose and pearl ship sailed to South America. "How long till we are old!"

"You and I together. . . . 'They shall renew their youth like the eagle'."

"When I was a child I used to think — "

"Keep your head turned that way. The light is on your hair."

The wedding day dawned, ascended. Whites, Lambs and Outerbridges had been asked. The Captain's house stood open and washed with air and light from room to room like the whorls of a shell. The parlor had jars of garden lilies and blue veronica. Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah wore new stuff dresses and carried each a worked handkerchief. The Captain was clothed in his Sunday coat. With his long silver beard and silver thatch, his pale-blue eyes and wrinkled hands, his every memory of the sea and the land, the *Merry Star* and earlier ships, havens and ports of call, settings forth and goals and ends, halcyon seas and restless weather, he might have sat for a marvelous, ancient, master portrait.

The minister came; every chair in the house was in use. There fell a sunny hush. Drury Randall and Rachael Gilbert entered at the door, stood and were married.

Jerry White's big boat, the *Nancy*, took mainland Gilberts and Outerbridges to the mainland again. But the immediate wedding party, Drury and Rachael, James Randall and Ann, sailed with Hugh in the *Happy Day*, and waiting for them at their landing found the Ball's old roomy carriage and a wagon be-

side for luggage. So they drove over the long, pleasant, sandy roads until they came to their landing and the hour for the Chesapeake boat. And here they said good-by to Hugh — but they meant to meet again and again — and in the bright lateness of the summer day crossed the wide Chesapeake and came at twilight to Old Point Comfort and a large, rambling, verandahed hotel, with *crêpe* myrtle and fig trees in its garden.

Thence, the next day, they went by the river boat up the James to Richmond, and here the elder Randall and Ann were to visit for a week and then home to Elderfield. But Drury and Rachael went for their honeymoon to the house and plantation where his mother had been born, near to the Potomac.

· XI ·

AMERICA grew and grew. The United States. The Union. Or the Federation. From the first a simple Federation. Part of the map between the Atlantic and the Pacific, Canada and the Gulf of Mexico, increasingly strengthened the voice when it said, "Union." Another part strengthened it when it said, "Federal." "It is a Federation. We have always guarded the Right to Withdraw." It was as one looked at it. Or according to the section in which one was born. Or according, sometimes, to one's self. There were those in the North who said, "I see it that way. A Federation." And some in the South said, "Whatever it was at first, it is now Union."

Young men and older men with their families went West and went West. The covered wagons strained on. Indians of the plains furiously withstood and massacred when they might, but were themselves doomed. Gold was found in California. Much gold. In New England and the Middle Atlantic States factories increased in number at a magnificent, or fearful, or fearfully magnificent rate. Coal and Steam became the pet names of the Age. The Mill, the Factory, the Works, the Railroad and Canal and Steamboat, the Warehouse and Mercantile Establishment, the Bank and the Banker, the Exchange. The Industrial Era was

yet a youth, but how lusty a youth! A young giant, a veritable Gargantua continuing to eat. The Southern States — and a vast curve of the map they filled — planted cotton, rice, sugar cane, tobacco, corn and other crops. They were agricultural; except to a limited extent not manufacturing. Their polity and their needs and their outlook and the polity and needs and outlook of their sisters above the Mason and Dixon line had a strong appearance of difference. In that part of the vast country white men and women and children worked long, long hours for meager pay; in this part, in the cotton, the rice, the cane, the tobacco and corn, black men and women and children did the same for no money at all but for food, clothing, warmth and shelter. The one might move from place to place and job to job; the other might not. The one was called the property of himself; the other was called the property of another. The white was “fired”; the black was sold. The latter system was seen to be creaking; the other had yet a long time to run.

Many things happened as the century stood at noon, a little before, on the prick, a little after. The Planet Neptune was discovered. There was great famine in Ireland.

Three grains of corn, Mother,
Give me three grains of corn,
To keep the little life I have
Until to-morrow morn.

In France a monarch abdicated, a republic arose with, for President, one Louis Napoleon who later on declared himself Emperor. Altogether, throughout Europe, these were revolutionary years. Ether began

to be used in surgery. Sir John Franklin did not return from the Arctic Circle. Carlyle, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson were culminating. John Stuart Mills wrote "Political Economy." A German named Wagner turned music in his hands. The Crystal Palace was built, and Queen Victoria opened the Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. South Carolina in convention resolved that "with or without coöperation we are for a dissolution of the Union." Henry Clay died and Daniel Webster. As always and always, event was multifarious beyond belief, immeasurable, compounded and recompounded. And what events were the most eventful, God in His wisdom might know.

The *Albany County Herald* dealt with what it might, as it might. The general and particular, the near and the far. Having James Randall for owner and senior editor, it continued in a changing world to be Jeffersonian Democrat, with a taste for things at large; its tone cool, slightly acrid, yet invigorating. It gave to opinion of its own order reach and resonance; it had not been and was not now the usual county paper. Its subscription list carried it afar; it was somewhat widely read, referred to, quoted. Its friends approved; its foes scornfully differed.

The autumn that Drury joined him James enlarged the paper by two additional pages with features of the magazine. A cultural wave was rising under and with the people. The lyceum, the platform, the pulpit, the book, the magazine. What if the book was usually — not always — an English book? It was a book. What if there was much indeed that was raw, immature, sentimental, copy-cat in the magazine? Green Youth.

Green Youth of America! James brought into his added pages the Poets' Corner and the weekly short essay, the reports of cultural activities, comment upon books, extracts and so forth; the half column which he had especially liked, given over to Science, Inventions and Discoveries; left ample room for expansion and innovation; and handed the whole over to Drury.

"Naturally you come in on the rest of the paper also. But I thought you might like this for your own bailiwick. Do what you want to with it, bring in or take out. I shan't carp or interfere. You have a free hand."

Drury studied the plan. "Very well, Father. I think I'll like it. And I think that you are very good to me."

"I don't see why I shouldn't be," answered James. "A fair exchange is no robbery."

They were seated in the elder's office with the Piranesi on the wall and the view out of window upon the buckeye tree, the pillars of the courthouse and Macduffie's store. A room that had been filled with lumber was cleaned, plastered and made ready for Drury. He found it waiting for him, and that his father had not furnished it nor hung anything on the wall but left that for him to do. He felt, sitting there with the beloved, familiar engraving of old Rome before him, how for all their difference he and his father fitted. There was no revolt in Drury against his family. There was an arcade where he and his mother walked together or sat listening to music or to poetry read, or looked forth upon images forming, dissolving, forming anew. His sisters and brothers had his affection, though he cared most for Ann. Molly possessed beauty and

'amusingness, but took her head. Nothing wrong in that, if the head was kept above water! Eskridge Keri and Molly were going to marry. Old Eskridge might manage the dance with Molly. Jim was gone West — walked off, in fact, but wrote from St. Louis that he wasn't so black as they might think him. They didn't think he was black, not one of them. They wrote, sending their blessing, and his father a sum of money. Now Jim was farther West yet and apparently happy enough, leading a strange, glittering, go-as-you-please-but-mind-your-step existence. But all existence was dangerous. Just to exist was dangerous and not to exist might be dangerous; probably was so. Plains of security and passes of danger, and without rhythm, deadness. Fitzhugh would go this autumn to the University; his intention was to become a lawyer. Artemisia was growing up; more like her mother than the others. Drury felt an elder brother's arm around them all.

Now he sat with his father in the office that he had known so very nearly all his life. He remembered it when his head was not more than level with the desk, when he was in skirts; he remembered silver dimes slipped into his hand with which to buy peppermint sticks at Macduffie's store. And now he was in his twenty-third year and married, and he and Rachael would have their own home, and he would be co-editor with his father of the old, staunch respected *Herald*. He would have two added pages in which to gather and lay out as in a market stall truth and beauty such as were to be found, and they to whom the paper went would take . . . in which to write himself what he might find to write. He sat in the visitor's chair, his

long legs disposed at ease, his big, finely shaped hands resting on the wooden arms, a sunbeam at play in his shock of tawny hair, fine-spun and vital, his deep-set blue eyes upon Piranesi's arches vanishing into light. Preston McGregor appearing in the door with a question on his lips, the senior editor went with him into the outer room. Drury sat on. The Aqueduct, the bringer of water. . . . Water above water, light above light, air above air, earth above earth . . . a fine light thrill went through his frame. A small door high up opened, a form came through, the door closed but the form lived on in light.

James Randall returned. "I had got a date and a statement wrong and Preston caught it. I don't think he'll stay forever setting type."

Drury rose. "Rachael and I are going again to look at the house. Father, I want to say just this, and then we'll go on, you and I, in our unemphatic, understand-each-other way. If I didn't honor my parents, I should be taken by the scruff of the neck and dropped into the abyss!"

James took up and put down the bronze Napoleon paper weight. "That's all right, Drury. Who gives most in this life is a very idle question. Your great-aunt Patsy and many others will tell you that I am an irreligious man. But I've always appreciated the fact that men and women live, and live forever, in one another. So I in you and you in me, and I really don't know what could rend us apart. And it doesn't give me pain to live in you Drury. It gives me enlargement and interest. — The house ought to be ready pretty soon now. Aren't you and Rachael going to the Runnybrook

auction? Old Mrs. Runnybrook had some good things."

To go to the house that was building Rachael and Drury had but to walk down the garden behind the house in Old Street, between the grapevines where hung the clusters dark blue and wine hued, to the willow, maple and sycamore-bordered creek and across by the footbridge, and so up to the farther bank a quarter mile and back a hundred yards to where, on a low hilltop, in a grove of ancient trees, their house was rising, of brick and frame, not tiny nor yet large, but ample enough for them now and easy to grow wings if ever they were needed.

The land had been James Randall's and was now Drury's. Down the hillside, over the creek, up through the garden of the house of his birth, or at choice through Indian Lane that was so named in the beginning, when there were but cabins and a fort and the Indians stole upon the place that way, and one would be in Elderfield. Drury would have each morning a pleasant walk to his office. Also a stable was to be built and in it would stand a horse and a buggy. James Randall had sold a great strip of bottom land to High Hill, and with the proceeds and something out of the bank he had fitted out his eldest son. The *Herald* grew year by year in scope and influence. James could be justly proud of it and expect it to continue to furnish the family living. He had inherited land from his father, and with a strong taste for the soil had since acquired and acquired, as it came his way. Elderfield was growing. All towns were growing, and plantations and farms increasing in number and in acreage. He sold from time to time, yet had much left. Old, rich, virgin earth,

meadow and timber that his father and his grandfather before him had hankered for and acquired in a day when little gold bought much land. James Randall sold, but yet had enough for Drury, for Jim, if ever Jim turned homeward, for Fitzhugh, for his daughters' portions, when they married. Good land, corn and grazing, on Old Cherokee River, and up and down Cherokee Creek; heavy timber up Tumbling Run and over the flank of Cherokee Mountain. He had never been extravagant, nor his forbears before him. Randalls lived simply, though with comfort and refinement. Drury didn't care much for money, nor did the woman he had married, either — Jim had cut loose — Fitzhugh must be put through the University and maintained until he had his footing in Richmond, where he was set upon living. But he would build a practice, having quite good brains. Molly was marrying High Hill, which meant the richest plantation in Albany County. Ann with her delicate health, poor child! would likeliest stay at home. Artemisia was yet a child. Land values growing everywhere with the great, vigorous, growing country. The *Albany County Herald* growing too. There would be enough for all. So thinking, James Randall wrote his editorials, standing for the most part with Jefferson's ideas, persuading his State to patience with, adherence to, the Union, suggesting actual, purposeful study of the economic situation with a view to the ultimate emancipation of the African, dealing with this question and with that, clear and cool and large-spirited.

The October coloring with the sun shining through turned the hillside and the grove atop into crown and

robe of glory. There was flame, there was light. A strong pure wind blew from the west and the south. It came from mountains, rivers great and small, endless forest, and far, far away unknown deserts and the world-vast Pacific. The sugar maples, the hickories, the ash and linden and the oak moved leaf and twig and bough as in a dance. Everywhere was murmur, sound of the wind among trees.

Drury and Rachael wandered through and about their house that was building. It was four o'clock and a Saturday; the men who were building for them were gone. All was sweet solitude, color and depth. At last they came to sit upon the dry turf sprinkled with bright leaves beneath a sugar tree that overlooked the whole. The tree was a great, old one; above them roof upon roof rose its fair fretwork against the blue sky. Rachael clasped her hands about her knees. Her head was thrown back, her bonnet beside her on the fallen leaves. "The sound is like the sea — like Outermost."

"Outermost! Outermost is always dawn to me and you coming along the beach to meet me. And I never heard of you — or maybe I just thought I had never heard of you. And now it is meeting and merging, and yonder is our house."

Half seated, half lying beside her, he pressed his lips upon her hands, then rested his forehead against her knee. "Our home," he said, "our children, our place, our life together — and when we die still together; we shall still be together. Always now, Rachael, always now and knowing it."

"Always, and knowing it. — Yes, Drury."

"I love you — I love you."

"I love you."

"I sought you on Outermost, not knowing it."

"I came away with you."

"I love you."

"I love you."

• XII •

THEIR house was finished and they dwelled in it. So sweet a house, so pleasant the half-mile walk to the beginning of High Street, so dear the direct way down to Cherokee Creek and across and up through the garden and the Old Street house and so on to High Street and down to the office. Often Rachael walked with Drury. To be spoken to by every one, to speak to every one, that was pleasant!

"Good morning, Mrs. Randall! Good morning, Drury!"

"Good morning, Mr. Robertson!"

Baliol Robertson looked after them. "I wonder how he found that woman. Got something of faëry in her, something of the muse. Not sophistication, but grace by nature. . . . Well, Love's young dream!" He entered his law office. "Love's young dream. Love's young dream."

"Good morning, Mrs. Randall! Good morning, Drury!"

That was the Linden Inglesants. The Major — from the Mexican War — and his wife. "We are going to have a party. Be sure you come!"

They would be there, though parties were not meat and drink to them. Parties galore had been given them by Albany County. It was the habit of the country and

the time; American hospitality and neighborliness; Southern hospitality with its own lavishness and accent. Linden found its joy in giving parties; High Hill, under Molly, was not far behind. Molly queened it like a young bright sovereign at High Hill, a daring, witty piece, Eskridge grinned, his hands in his pockets, and followed after.

"Good morning, Mrs. Randall. Good morning, Drury."

"Good morning, Mr. Warren." "Good morning, Jacob."

Jacob looked back at them when they had passed. "No drinking and no gaming any more, any more at all! Stopped even before he married her. . . . Reformed character."

"Good morning, Rachael! Good morning, Drury!"

"You've been shopping early, Aunt Patsy. Let me carry those parcels."

Miss Patsy Randall relinquished them to her great-nephew. "Garden seeds and a trowel and calico for a sunbonnet. Are you quite well, Rachael?"

"Yes, quite, Aunt."

"Drury, a poem has been sent me by an old friend. I don't set myself up for a judge, but it seems to me noble and beautiful. I thought you might like it for the *Herald*."

"If it is truly good, I shall, Aunt Patsy."

"It is a religious poem. On the Hereafter. You shouldn't let that prejudice you."

"I don't."

"Oh, you may say you don't! I was going to take it to the office. But as you are so near my house, maybe

you'll step in and read it. *I* think it is beautiful and will do a great deal of good. And it will please Cynthia, of course, to have it where it can be read by many."

At seventy, Aunt Patsy moved as tall, as gaunt, as fervid as when the twelve-year-old Drury walked with her under the stars to the revival. She had all these years of enthused life and enjoyed them, ancient pythoiness that she was! Heaven and hell, unbalanced, unreconciled, untempered each by other; blinding light, blind darkness, a moon landscape — what subjects she had for contemplation, and how fiercely she must fight for souls and the Only Dogma! She fought, and so passionately simple was she that one might love her even though one could not steer her. Drury loved her as James could not. Even when she was most exasperating, he found himself at an inner touch again with her under the stars, going to, coming from, the revival. The Bible that she gave him was the copy that he read when he read the Bible. No more ever would he read it as she read it. But he knew and loved the Bible.

They turned into Willow Street and here stood her small house. It was early spring and many young flowers bloomed in beds and along the paths. She was a great gardener. Throughout his life her great-nephew never smelled certain blooms but they brought back spring weather and the path from the gate to her door, and when he saw morning-glories he saw her little porch in summer.

The poem. Well, it was not what he would have chosen to represent either the Hereafter or the Column of the Poets in his department of the *Albany County*

Herald. He was austere when it came to insertions here. . . . He might put it elsewhere in the paper as a contribution. . . . He would please her when he could — being so great a disappointment to her in other ways.

“Yes. I will put it in. In a place by itself, I think.”

Miss Patsy was pleased, but she did not consider it a favor. She was providing an Opportunity. “May it bring at least a few to think of the Reckoning!”

Rachael stood looking at the Roman hyacinths, dark blue and white, a long row of delicate stems and single flowers, so fragrant, and the honey bees knowing it. She was not paying attention to the colloquy about the poem; she stood rapt before the hyacinths, and yet aware of the ocean and the beach of Outermost and the salt sweet air that streamed through the house of her cousin, the old sea captain. As for Drury he could speak to Miss Patsy about those verses and yet keep Rachael in vision. Into him flowed a feeling, a perception, a divination, he knew not what. It took no sharp edges, no looming form; it was as without size as the still, small voice; it had to do with a deep and everlasting Oneness that yet issued at a step into an Otherness exquisite, not without pain — oh, not without pain! Her figure flowed, it was within him, it was without him; there struck on some inner nerve the hyacinth and Outermost. All went by, though it left its trace. Rachael, his dear wife, stood regarding the Roman hyacinth, and he heard his own voice still upon the poem.

Miss Patsy was gratified. “I may truly say that it is not often I get what I wish out of the *Herald*, but

better once than never. Sit down, children, both of you, and Dinah shall bring you some elderflower wine and sugar cakes. You used to like those cakes, Drury."

"I like them now, Aunt Patsy."

They sat upon the porch step, below them in the beds daffodil and hyacinth, snowdrop, bluebell and violet, bush honeysuckle and flowering almond, and at the corner of the yard a great cherry tree in bloom. The bees hummed incessantly. Rachael sat with her arms around her knees. "The *Star*. I am out in the *Star*. I am here, and I am out in the *Star*."

The wine and the cakes appeared, borne by Dinah, Miss Patsy's only servant.

"How do you do, Dinah? How's the rheumatism?"

Drury and Rachael drank the wine out of tiny old glasses and munched the sugar cakes. Then Drury put Aunt Patsy's friend's poem into his pocketbook, and taking her by surprise, gave Aunt Patsy herself a great hug, and Rachael kissed her, after which they took their leave. Out of Willow Street again into High Street.

"Good morning, Mrs. Randall. Good morning, Drury."

That was Mr. Beck, who had been Drury's schoolmaster. They walked together. "I've been meaning to find an occasion to tell you, Drury, that you're an added power in the *Herald*. I hear comment buzzing from week to week. You can't expect it all to be favorable. Not every body understands or has a taste for some of the things you get together, or write yourself, for that matter. I've heard quite heated divergences of opinion. That's to be expected. That's mental

life. Also misunderstandings of mental life. Your father's got his strength and evidently you've got your strength. Always thought you had. You needn't negative what I say. But I see you don't. You probably know you've got it. Why shouldn't intellect know itself and why should it mince and flutter? I never did. What I have I have, what I am I am."

"You are a mighty good teacher, sir," said Drury. "I know that all right and owe you a lot."

"A grateful and a reverencing heart are good things, aren't they, Mrs. Randall? And God knows a good pupil helps out a good master. — What fine weather we're having!"

And here were the buckeye trees unfolding silken buds, and Crumpet the devil coming out of the green door with a great bundle of papers. "Good morning, Crumpet!"

"Good morning, Mr. Drury!"

"What are you reading now?"

"'Dick Daring on the Mississippi,' sir. Jimminy! It's a good one!"

Crumpet went on whistling. Rachael and Drury entered the building. "Good morning, Mr. Price. Good morning, Preston! Yes, it's a lovely day. Is my father in?"

"Not yet, Mr. Drury. He had to see Mr. Webb about something."

Rachael entered Drury's room with him. "Just a minute and then I'll fly away. I like your room so."

"Our room. You're with me — with me — with me here. If my eyes get tired I shut them and the sun comes up from the sea and along a white beach steps a woman,

and forever there is a great newness and redoubled life. . . . Forever!"

She stood beside the desk, at her throat, fastened to her dress of some springlike flowered stuff by an amethyst that had been her mother's, the slender single hyacinth she had gathered. "Ah, Drury, I love you so!"

They clasped and kissed. Preston McGregor's voice was heard approaching the door. Rachael took the hyacinth from her throat, set it in water in a tiny silver vase upon the desk and was gone, swift and light and poised, and to him forever beautiful.

· XIII ·

LATE in the autumn was born their first child, a daughter, and they named her Ann. When Ann was two years old they had a son and named him Gilbert.

They called their place Cherokee House. There was the water and behind them Cherokee Mountain, and the shades, friendly now, no longer hostile, of those old Indians. Their ancient life, their polity, their lore and worship, might be met with by the seeing eye and time in the deep woods.

Cherokee House. Husband and wife and two children. They had a garden, an orchard, fields and meadows and untouched woodland. In the stable stood a riding horse for Drury and a carriage horse, Chief and Arab. There were two dogs, Bran and Rover; two cows, Pansy and Clover, a poultry yard, a peacock and peahen, and in the creek paddled the ducks. To keep the place and the house, make the garden, tend the stock, cook and serve the meals, nurse the children, they had six servants, Ferris, Tom, Albany, Ailsa, Sally, and Doris, the last being the children's mammy. Of these, Ferris and Sally his wife were free Negroes, the rest slaves. The quarter consisted of three or four cabins by the streamlet that ran through the orchard down to the creek.

Elderfield grew in size and importance, but yet

remained a small town — no manufactures, as yet no railroad — Southern, a red-brick, tree-shaded market town and county seat, rippling out into the county of corn and wheat and lesser crops, fine stock and great hayfields, plantations and farms, gristmills with dripping wheels, clinking, cheerful smithies, and half a dozen hamlets aspiring to become villages. In Southern polity it was the county that counted.

The United States grew like the beanstalk, but the change was more restless and intense in the North. It was in the North that the immigrants landed; in the North that the factories sprang and clustered like the flowers and pods of the beanstalk; in the North that Capital and Capitalism took on their specific meaning. To the eye the South remained more static, more old-fashioned, more unprogressive — though of course it had its own expansion. As for the Middle West, the West of the Mississippi Valley, it grew and grew and grew, and the northerly portion of it leaned north and the southerly portion leaned south. As for the far West, fabled and fabulous, Land of Promise and Eldorado were yet covering terms.

The fifth decade of the nineteenth century, and its energies and its questions and its side-takings. The several colors of a chessboard. Many chessboards with opposed formations. With all aboard these States traveled like an express train, like a clipper ship before the wind.

In a vivid, clamant continent, a vivid, clamant Press had arisen. The *Albany County Herald* hardly expressed itself in those terms; rather it was an old, strong vehicle, built after a pattern of former years but

still usefully and handsomely traveling the public road. By prescription and by intrinsic quality it held its place. There were those in its own State—and a greater number as the decade advanced—who cried “Slow Coach!” But on it went, moved by its Idea, and those who liked it traveled with it, and those who did not chose other vehicles, as was their right. In politics it remained Jeffersonian. Amid the more and more talk of the South, should things go on as they were, being forced to part from the North, its position remained that while secession under stress and duress might be academically correct and was indeed present as a contingency in the minds of the Fathers and duly provided for in the Bill of Rights, yet was it not expedient, and under almost any provocation should not be considered so. “All things are lawful unto me” saith Saint Paul, “but all things are not expedient.” Patience and yet patience, and Remain in the Union. All that could be gained by marching out might yet be had and better had by remaining in the general bond. Give time time; give time time. Upon slavery it kept stanchly and boldly the position it had occupied since its founding. “A system that is obsolete and rightly obsolete. Let us get together, let us think, let us begin and carry through a programme of emancipation—not individual freedoms given which we have had from the beginning, not Liberia, hopeful as that is in some ways, but planned and general action, extending if need be over a set period, but in some agreed upon and reasonable time, under some fiscal arrangement whereby the thousands of owners will not be ruined, putting an end forever and finally to an institution

once universal in these States but now for historic, and climatic and economic reasons banked in the South. So Mr. Jefferson would counsel; so many think in this State to-day."

Thus James Randall, editorially, in the *Herald*. And on raced the decade.

The elder Randall remained principal owner and editor-in-chief of the paper. His was the immediate political bent, the recognized political force. The son acquiesced, thinking in much as the father thought, and where he differed not finding in that a claim to interfere. His own work, his own representation and influence were at a remove from the whistling wind of the times and the growing controversy. In his pages he gathered thought and speculation from near and afar, and he commented upon his inclusions. In addition each week saw a contribution of his own which might be best termed an essay. Sometimes it was very short, sometimes longer. These papers were signed by a Greek word meaning Seeker. They were read by how many who could tell? By some negligently or skip-pingly, by some fallen foul of, by some savored and recurrently looked for. Elderfield and Albany County, when it wished to describe him to some newcomer, might say "a man of letters", or "a poet", or "some kind of a thinker", or may be, plain out, "a dreamer."

A matter of business taking him to the town by the University and the University itself, he spent an evening with his old, loved professor.

"I see a man grown — as is our manner of speech," said the professor. "How old are you?"

"Thirty."

"And a family man with wife and children."

"Yes. Rachael — and Ann and Gilbert."

"And happy?"

"Yes, happy."

"But you sign your pieces, 'Seeker'."

"Oh, yes, I seek."

The professor lighted his pipe. "Don't you smoke?"

"Sometimes. But I won't to-night. I like to feel, sir, that I am sitting here, your pupil still. — How pleasant is this study and the piled books and the School of Athens! How pleasant to be back, sir!"

The professor smoked. "I had my anxiety about you. You don't mind freedom of speech? I feared that as with many a youth of more than promise certain vices might grow to become the dragon that would defeat you, body, soul and spirit. . . . I sometimes saw when I looked at you the endless line, to speak romantically, of knights defeated, arms reversed. Guyon, let us say, out of the 'Faëry Queene' defeated and lost to the Round Table. Or, to come to later tale-tellers, Browning's 'Dark Tower' — the Dark Tower that's swallowed and spewed out the bones of so many.

"Childe Harold to the Dark Tower came.

"The very felt strength, the very promise, betrayed and betraying. In my time I have seen many."

He sat silent and Drury sat silent. Then said the latter, "I might have gone that way, despite your warning and my father's warning, sir. It is in me to do it, the old giant, the old Scorpion." He paused, rose from his chair and walked to the window that gave upon a starry night, stood there a minute then returned.

"But I have turned into another way. I do not mean that the dragons are dead in me until they are so in all other men. But now I can say *Retro me Sathanas!*"

He sat again with the other by the light fire, it being an autumn night. "I owe much to many in my life — to my wife and children and my father and mother and kindred, including an old great-aunt, and to friends and teachers. You sit here always, sir, more powerful than the Sphinx and more lasting in my mind."

The professor, who was a little man and often called an oddity and who knew that he was so dubbed, winked away a moisture. It was sweet to him what Drury said. He had taught and taught young men, and very few had so spoken to him. He winked against the fire and smoked like a small volcano.

Drury lounged with his hands in his pockets. "I am thirty. . . . Doesn't it sound absurd to say, 'I am thirty'?"

"It does. I say, 'I am sixty', and that's absurd too."

The flame rising and falling sprinkled light. Two candles burning did not banish the pleasant shadows that advanced and retreated like a frieze aquiver against the bookshelves that lined the small room. The shadows, now formless, now taking form, might have been a starting forth of old thinkers, old poets, old tale-tellers.

Said the professor, "Drury, I like what you are doing in the *Herald*. You're taking Mr. Emerson's advice — hitching your wagon to a star."

"Am I? I don't know."

"There are planets that our attention is not much

occupied with to-day. But it may not be always so. Each of them doubtless has among us his small court, his few adherents. Your Uranus or your Neptune. . . . Their future and their servants' future."

The talk fell away. He sat smoking and Drury, his long legs before him, stared into the fire.

· XIV ·

WHEN Ann was five and Gilbert three, Drury and Rachael took them to Outermost for half a summer. The old Captain yet lived. Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah were not much changed, though they, too, were older, as was the world and even Outermost. A young Jane Outerbridge from the mainland lived with them and cheerfully did her best. Will White was grown a young man and set up for himself with his own boat, but another lad brought fish and hoed the garden and sailed the *Star*. Jerry White's was grown almost a tavern, certain passionate fishermen and a couple of adventurous families with young boys having taken to summering here from Richmond and Baltimore. But Outermost was not cluttered, and never would be so.

Drury stayed a fortnight, then leaving the three and Mammy Doris, sailed with Will White to the mainland and took the road that led him first to Baltimore and thence to Philadelphia and thence to New York. He had not till now been out of his native State.

In atmosphere Baltimore seemed but a greater Richmond, though of course it presented differences. But to an extent it felt of the South. What interested him most was its tincture of Catholicism. He was there a week; he had business, and certain contacts to make.

All went interestingly, but when he could make time he directed his steps to the cathedral, entered and sat there, stilly observant, as he might have sat, had often and often sat, in the great woods at home, by Tumbling Run or Old Cherokee River, or lifted on some spur of Cherokee Mountain. At home when he went — not every Sunday — to the Presbyterian church, there, too, waves of history, of thought and feeling, rose and sank within him. They had one fragrance. Here with organ and color and pomp, with one strong male voice intoning, with the hush, the lifting, the Sanctus bell, rose, culminated and sank other waves of history, of thought and feeling, and another fragrance. The fragrances of the human garden, the human forest. . . . From Baltimore he traveled to Philadelphia. He had, definitely, the historic sense. Here, in this city, inwardly he moved amongst Revolutionary scenes and in a merchant element, the earlier commerce, trading and ships, and with Penn and his settlers and with Indians that were not infuriated nor vengeful, with kept treaties, a Quaker tone and spirit. He sought out a Friend's Meetinghouse and sat with them in quietness. Seated there in the silence and the quiet, clear light, something stirred and breathed high up within him. It was but for an instant — a part of an instant. He had light and awe and home-likeness; then it fell or he fell on slumber again and only remembered that there had been a moment, and only added it in memory to a short jewel string of instants of its kindred. But despite that "only" it was much, it was much indeed, to have it in memory, for that meant that it did not die but lived, though far away.

Out of the door of the Meetinghouse a woman in pale gray, of an age to have been his mother, spoke to him. "Good day, friend! I was watching thy face. The spirit moved thee."

Drury answered her with his wide smile. "It might be," he said, speaking as he usually did with simplicity. "One name and one description are as quaintly true as another."

He and the Quaker woman walked together for five minutes in a peaceful silence, then she smiled at him and nodding her head turned into a quiet street.

From Philadelphia he journeyed to New York. The trains interested him, the folk, the towns at which they left or entered the train. He was receptive; here, there and everywhere, then and now and to-morrow, he felt America and more than America. The New Jersey terminal interested him, and certainly the great ferry. With his portmanteau at his feet, he stood upon the moving great boat and watched that harbor and the city that approached and approached, ever larger. It was morning still, with a drift of mist and a pressure of clean, strong salt air, and with many wheeling sea birds. Upon the ample waters moved sailing craft small and great, and shrill-whistling steam tugs and deep-throated larger boats. With a thrill his eyes met an ocean liner. He marked her — a Cunarder — he heard her deep voice, and he thought, "Shall I ever go abroad; shall I ever cross the sea?"

The city came like a bandage close to his eyes. The ferry-boat entered her slip, he took up his portmanteau.

In the Astor House, in his own room, he sat and wrote to Rachael. "My Dearest Heart —"

Later in the afternoon he walked and walked. When it came evening, after his solitary dinner, he found out the Academy of Music and that he could get a ticket, and he heard Italian singers in "Il Trovatore."

At one in the morning, through his window streaming the summer air and the almost silence of the city, he dropped to sleep upon a thought, "How rich is Appearance only! The thousand-folded rich appearance.

"Nothing in him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.

Then thank the Power and the Glory for very appearance!"

In the early sunlight he waked and lying still saw very clearly Rachael and the children upon the beach.

His business in New York was to make contact with a certain publisher to whom in the late spring he had sent a manuscript containing twoscore poems, none long, the most short enough. To-day he found him in an old brick business house, in a fine room.

"Yes. As I wrote you, I think that this is poetry. Rather close-wrought, rather strange work. But often unusual beauty. This one, for instance — and this — and this. There are a few that I'd leave out — not many. But altogether an achieving first work — yes, achieving. — You know that there isn't much money in poetry?"

Drury said with his broad smile that he knew that, but that he liked to write it.

"Well, then — Yes, we'll publish this for you, though it will be no great shucks what we make and

what you make. There won't be any brass band acclaiming you, either."

"I know. I don't look for it. But I am obliged to you."

"I'll lay out then for you the business part. Or perhaps you'll tell me first something about yourself? And I hope you'll lunch with me."

He spent six days in New York, viewing the city and its sights. Five hundred thousand souls it had beyond a doubt; it was a great place and a busy one. There were newspapers enough, but a country editor from the mountainous side of Virginia might have his diffidences. At any rate, Drury did not introduce himself. The publisher who would presently become his publisher — and that had a strange but pleasant taste to Drury — taking a measure of liking to the tall, sauntering, slow-speaking Virginian, made a dinner party for him. His home was pleasant, his wife and daughters cheerful and courteous; he gathered six writers, a recognized poet, two novelists, a historian, an essayist and a maker of plays to meet Mr. Drury Randall. The poet and one of the novelists were women. Drury — all of them — found the evening enjoyable. The woman novelist, who had lately been in Great Britain, was a capital mimic. Dublin, Edinburgh and London all became mirthful. The historian was likewise a fisherman, had fished for trout in Virginia mountain streams, and by all the luck in the world had once spent a week in Albany County and knew Tumbling Run. The publisher himself turned out to be a good *raconteur*. After dinner, in a big parlor with lace curtains astir in the summer breeze, the writer

for the stage who was interested in such things proposed a table turning, whereupon they made a circle around a heavy mahogany table. Drury had not seen this done before, though he had read of it. His reading was omnivorous. The table, some minutes being gone, tipped, then began to rock. "Now I'll use the alphabet," said the dramatist. Their pooled currents spelled out various statements, some to the point, some not. They carried it on, half seriously, half gleefully, for half an hour, then two or three tiring, dropped it. After this there was music, the publisher's daughter singing well, and the essayist capable of a good deal at the piano.

Outside the long windows extended a narrow balcony with wrought-iron railings. The woman novelist who had engaged in a murmured conversation with Drury, made a gesture toward it. "It is so sweet out there! Let us look at all the lights." They stepped without the window. The gas lamps burned like giant topazes or spaced fireflies, over the roofs rose the moon. The persistent footsteps on the pavements coming, going, directly at hand, produced in him as always a muffled thrill, wondering and half sad. There were upon the balcony several light chairs. She slipped into one and motioned him to another. "Music sounds so much better out here."

The essayist was playing Meyerbeer. "Look at the moon! What is that star?" and when he told her, "It seems to me that you are a monster of learning! Is that what you do in the Virginia mountains, — learn, learn?"

"I edit under my father a county newspaper."

"Our host says he will bring out for you a volume of poems."

"Yes, a small volume."

She was a woman of perhaps thirty-five, with large dark eyes and full red lips. She was dressed in black lace and waved with a languorous, graceful movement a Spanish fan.

"Dare I hope that you have read any book of mine?"

"Not yet."

"They are only three. You still read old, old things in the South, don't you? — Are you married?"

"Yes."

"Tell me about her."

"Why, no," said Drury. "I do not think so. Tell me instead what you write and why."

"Oh, I was born to be articulate — " she said, and continued. And that was the only literary conversation of the pleasant evening.

When the six days were about to be spent he debated in his mind, walking at the time on the Battery. At last, determined, he caught his street car and went to thank the publisher for his good offices and to tell him good-by. "I'm taking another week and going to New England."

"Ah, well, that's a pleasant country — in summer! Boston, I suppose? We're scholarly in spots in New York, but Boston is scholarly all over."

"Boston, yes. But Concord is why I'm going."

"I see. Emerson. I could have made my guess that you have a feeling for him."

"Yes, I have a feeling for him. I have," said Drury, "a feeling for many. But I owe him a great deal, and

who knows if I will ever come North again? I should like to see and speak to him in the body. So I shall start to-morrow, I think."

He spent the better part of two days in Boston, awaiting from Concord an answer to his letter. Reading a morning paper, he marked a notice of an Abolition Meeting, and with deliberation found that evening the large hall in which it was held and a gallery seat whence he could well behold and hear. There were to be three speakers with music between. The speeches were what he expected to hear. Father and son, the two Randalls were not unread in the utterances of the Abolition Society. It was in the province of their profession, and in their painful interest in a secular movement with all its exaggeration, disproportion, passionate judgments, and inevitable, necessitous advance. He sat and listened with a faintly knitted brow and a forefinger rising and falling against the arm of his seat. Most whom he knew would have cried, "Overwhelming and universal slander!" He did not nod to that, but neither did he nod to this hall's "Truth as God sees it!" There were great heat and tension in the place, the speakers were vehemently applauded, and then broke out a wailing music. At last it was over. He walked the streets for a while before he went to his hotel and to bed.

In the morning was his letter from Mr. Emerson. He was asked to stay the day and night. He went to Concord.

In the simple, sunny room of the square white house the two sat together and the elder queried and the younger answered; then somewhat later the younger

queried and the elder answered. The weather breathed balm. They walked through the pleasant, storied country, and in Walden wood. It was all to Drury's lasting remembrance, as were the candle-lit evenings in the quiet house. Mr. Emerson took to him and that with some markedness. The day and night of the first invitation expanded. It came that he stayed the better part of a week in Concord. The older philosopher and poet opened to the younger, and the younger could speak of his inner man and world. There was no condescension other than that of priority.

The second day, in Walden wood, they met a man not tall, wiry, with a big nose and a weather-beaten skin, and not ten years, Drury thought, older than himself, whom Mr. Emerson hailed as "Henry" and introduced as Mr. Thoreau, and who walked with them for an hour, taking them by Walden Pond. Mr. Emerson knew forest, sky and water in one way, Mr. Thoreau in another, Drury in another, yet all loved that which they knew and could give spangles of knowledge the one to the other.

Again he met in Concord, in their own houses, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Amos Bronson Alcott. Always, in his memory, this week remained with a strange luster and a sound of Doric music . . . and yet Athenian, too . . . and yet with all this, American.

It was over. He parted with it — and did not part with it — and traveled back to Virginia.

And here was the Eastern Shore, and Will White's boat, and here was Outermost, and Rachael in his arms and then Ann and Gilbert.

IN THE parlor of the house in Old Street Maria played a gay, emphatic old dance, and Artemisia taught Little Ann and Little Molly Kerr their steps. The children's Aunt Ann sat curled in an armchair with Catarina the Third. May sunshine poured in, through the window peered syringa and lilac. "Now, Molly! Now, Ann!" cried Artemisia's clear, musical young voice. Molly and Ann, holding their skirts, soberly and intently danced.

The High Hill carriage stopped before the gate. "There's your mother!" said Artemisia to Little Molly. "Learn the step quick, to surprise her!"

Molly entered. "Howdy, everybody!" She stooped to kiss Ann in the big chair and her mother at the piano. "Go on, darling! — Brava!" then threw off her spring mantle and scoop bonnet and began herself to dance with Artemisia and the children. It came to an end. Maria Randall took her hands from the keys.

"Have you heard from Eskridge?"

"Yes. They are going to build the railroad. Won't it be funny — a railroad by Elderfield?"

She sat down. Maria rose from the piano and returned to the sofa. The children wished to know if

they might play in the garden and might each have a slice of buttered bread with brown sugar. "Yes. Find Mammy and go ask Aunt Ceres."

They departed, each with a hand in Artemisia's.

"Neither is the dearer," spoke Maria from the sofa. "They are the dearest. They and Jem and Gilbert."

"Molly hasn't got my looks," said the elder Molly. "She takes after Eskridge."

"Well, if she has Eskridge's ability —" said Ann from the big chair.

"Oh, I *like* them to have a glint of the father," answered Molly. "Rachael shows too much, I think, in both her children."

"How absurd! There's just as much of Drury."

"Oh, I know that you and Mother — and Drury — are sworn to Rachael!"

"Children, don't get crossed," Maria from the sofa looked at her daughters indulgently. "There's room for Rachael's kind, Molly — beautiful room. And there's room for your kind — beautiful room. Different kinds of music, that's all."

Artemisia returned. "They're happy. Stand up, Molly, and turn around so that we can see that lovely dress."

Molly obligingly stood and pirouetted, and Artemisia wholeheartedly praised, as also did the others.

"It's lovely! You oughtn't to spend it on Elderfield, Molly! It ought to be saved for the White Sulphur."

"Oh, I believe in wearing what you've got — and then God will send others! We're going to the White the first of July, Mother — we've the same cottage as

last year — and I want Artemisia to go with us. Our guest and for the whole summer.”

“Oh!” cried Artemisia, opening dark eyes like her mother’s. “Oh, Molly!”

“That’s lovely of you and Eskridge, Molly!”

“Yes, it is,” said Ann.

Molly was as pleased as the others. “She ought to have, besides what she’d have in Elderfield, at least four dresses. Two tarlatans, a silk, a couple of morning dresses, a poplin maybe.”

“We’ll manage it, my dear. — Ah, Artemisia, I saw myself just then at your age — in a worked muslin and an India scarf — not at the White Sulphur, no! but in the moonlight, out from the long windows at home, and the dancing going on in the house, and our three old fiddlers — ”

“Were you alone, Mother?”

“No. A young Mr. James Randall, visiting in the neighborhood, was with me. . . .”

She lay with a slender, still beautiful arm curved under her head, and a smile just flickering over her face. “Ah, Mother,” said Ann. “In my opinion not one of your daughters can touch you!”

Dilsey entered with a note for her mistress. “It’s from Linden,” said Maria. “A party, Artemisia, think of that! A small one, next Wednesday. Molly and Eskridge will be having an invitation and Rachael and Drury.”

“Wednesday!” said Molly. “Well, that won’t interfere. I’m planning a large one for the middle of the month. Winter’s gone, there must be parties in the spring. — Eskridge wants Drury and Rachael to come

for at least a month to the White. They could have a cottage near us."

"They're going this summer to Outermost."

Molly made a pause, then spoke with force. "Eskridge says there are always important, representative men at the White. He says Drury doesn't make half the acquaintances he should all over the State and the whole South, for that matter. Books and thought are all very well, but he's an editor. Eskridge says that if Father won't prod him to do it — and Father won't — he'd like to try his hand before it's too late. — For my part," her color heightened, "I don't think that Rachael's at all the wife for a man who should make his way to the top."

A spark came out of Ann's gray eyes. "I know you don't. But Drury does, and I suppose it's his affair."

"And now she drags him back to that God-forsaken island out in the sea!"

"They've been married going on nine years, and this is only the third time they'll have gone to Outermost. They haven't been there for two years. Captain Gilbert is failing and she wants to see him again. It's the best place possible for the children — much better, I'd say, than the White Sulphur Springs. As for Drury, he loves it and has from the first minute."

"I know!" answered Molly. "She's more your sister than I am. All the same, she'll never help him extend his influence!"

"There are more directions than one."

"Girls, girls!" spoke Maria from the sofa. "Yes, there are more directions than one, and Drury and Rachael, I think, would never have married save as

they did marry. And you are the wife Eskridge wanted, Molly, and you are a great helper to him, and it is appreciated, my dear, by him and by others. Let us have harmony!"

"I am sure I have no objection," said Molly. "All the same —"

"And I'm sure I have none," said Ann.

But Molly could not stop. "Something always goes wrong when I talk of Rachael! I believe you think I *dislike* her. I don't, and I do her justice. I'd never say she neglected her house or the children. She doesn't. Nor that she doesn't love her husband and children. It's evident that she does. Nor that people don't like her in Elderfield and the county. There are some folk that take a great fancy to her. But for all that, every time I look at her I see how she's in some other land — away off there — never thinking of Drury's interests nor going out of her way to serve them as I — as I do for Eskridge. She's not *ambitious* for him or herself or the children or anything. She always makes me impatient, looking right through one as though she saw only her old island and lighthouse, or the other side of the earth, or the evening star, or something — oh, well, I don't expect to be understood! I don't think I ever have been."

"Ah, my dear," said Maria. "Who ever wholly understands or is understood? We must do the best we can. Come and kiss me! Thank you again, a thousand times, for Artemisia. It's lovely of you and Eskridge. — How pretty you are, Molly!"

After this they talked of the approaching party at High Hill and of the White Sulphur and Artemisia's

début there, and of the at-last-secured railroad through Albany County, and of the latest news from Jim in California, and of Fitzhugh, who would doubtless make a great lawyer and end as Governor of Virginia, and of Aunt Patsy Randall and of the flowers in the garden — and of Hugh Ball. “Eskridge met him in Richmond — consulting engineer, you know. He’ll be in Albany County sooner or later, deciding, I reckon, where they’ll have trestles and tunnels. — Ann, you are certainly stronger than you were last year. Why don’t you marry him? His people are rather plain though very respectable. But Eskridge says he’s absolutely the gentleman and a rising man. I’m sure he’s asked you, Ann. Why don’t you?”

Ann put down Catarina and lifted her tall, slight figure from the armchair. “Why don’t all folk do this for you, Molly, and do that for you? Perhaps because they’ve got their own heart and conscience. As you say, a woman ought to be able to help a man.” She came closer to Molly and touched the flounced and lovely spring dress. “But what’s it all about — quarrels between sisters? Molly is Molly, and Ann is Ann, but let’s find the bridge. The bridge is, I think, that you’re so pretty and gay, and head over heels in love with Eskridge, and generous as you can be with your worldly goods. — Let’s be friends.”

The High Hill carriage bore the two Mollies away. Little Ann kissed her grandmother and her two aunts and stroked Catarina, after which she and her favorite rag doll and Mammy Doris pursued the sunny garden path between the grapevines to Cherokee Creek and the footbridge and over the flashing water and so on to Cherokee House, which was dear home.

In the Old Street house Artemisia went to her own room to sit in a dream of "the Springs" and pretty clothes and hundreds of new acquaintances, maybe friends, and green walks and rides, and music and dancing, and young men and women. In the big parlor the sunny air streamed from the mountains and the vales past the lilac and the guelder-rose. Maria lay propped on the sofa, beneath the old wine-hued pillow a novel — a good novel; she rarely read trash. Ann sat on in the big chair, her head pressed against the chintz, her gray eyes closed. Maria's dark ones rested upon her daughter in a mixture of solicitousness, humor and understanding. Ann sighed, moved and opened her eyes. Said the mother, "Child, you *are* better. Your cough's better, you are stronger, Doctor Moon says so. If you go on like this, I see no reason why, next year maybe, you shouldn't say 'Yes' to Hugh."

"I think I'm better," said Ann. "I think maybe I'll live now — I never thought it before — live maybe as long as most. But I won't ever be really well, and I don't think I could or should have children. I like Hugh very much indeed — maybe I love him a little — but I won't be broken-hearted and he won't be broken-hearted. He's got his life and his work and he needs another kind of wife than I could make. No, Maria," she spoke to her mother so at times. "I'm going to be *the* maiden aunt . . . like Anne in 'Persuasion,' if she hadn't betrayed her vocation and married Captain Wentworth! I am going to make the best of it . . . Now if I had Aunt Patsy's fire! — but maybe I've got my own fire."

"Yes, you have," said Maria. "As I have mine. We

all have fire and warm ourselves by it. Well, darling, your father and I are *willing* to have you just here, not elsewhere. — Is Hugh's living so close to Outermost the reason you won't go with Drury and Rachael and the children?"

"Yes, it is. He may be digging tunnels and building trestles, but he'll be on the Eastern Shore some part of the summer. . . . I don't want to have to go all over it and through it again. . . . Maria, you understand so, and it's such a comfort!"

She stood up. "Come on, Catarina, and get your saucer of milk." Passing the sofa she bent and kissed Maria. "You and I and Rachael get along very well together, don't we?"

• XVI •

CAPTAIN DAVID GILBERT had lived many years and his hour must be nigh run out. Yet evidently there were yet in the hourglass running sands; no one might tell, perhaps a good bit of sand yet to run before there would befall stillness, short or long; before the Thought of thoughts and the Hand of hands turned again the glass. Captain David, a very old man, yet could pace his half hour up and down before the house he had built, or sit in the sunshine in the doorway that faced the sea. At long intervals now, having become incurious in that wise, he fixed his telescope and swept the horizon. Westward, the green marshes and the thousand, thousand seafowl, and the wide, smooth water and the few fishing boats; eastward, the old Atlantic and afar, at times, the sails of the trade from south to north and north to south. The sea captain had yet his faculties. Inside the breaking shell, withdrawing, withdrawing toward the invisible door, a shrewd spirit kept itself intact.

An unmarried man, he had had in his long sea and island life few contacts with children. But now Ann and Gilbert were become his darlings. All his strangely shaped, gleaming shells, gathered from the Indies, gathered from the Gulf of Mexico, were free to their

small hands; already in his mind he had set a codicil to his will, parting his collection between them. He never thought perhaps of their being anything but children, or perhaps he thought he saw their children and that these, too, might love such things. With care shells lasted, with care they lasted. He let the two look in turn through the telescope, but they were not of an age to care so much for this. It was Ann who liked his stories, who sat with her arms around her knees — a trick from her mother — upon the sunny doorstep, beside his old chair. "Tell me another story about the *Merry Star*." Or, "Tell me again that story about when the *Merry Star* picked up a little colored boy drifting on a coconut tree." Or, "Tell me about the *Merry Star* and the iceberg." Or, "Tell me about the storm, and the lights all breaking out on the masts and spars like candles, and the sailor thought he saw a man walking on the waters."

But it was Gilbert who walked with him up and down the sandy path, like an absurd, jolly little cabin boy, up and down with the captain, which was a highly absurd thing to think about! The eighty-year-old and the six-year-old covered the path together. Sometimes they went farther and came out upon a dune and sat in the sun and made together a sand castle.

This was the third visit of the Randalls to the Gilberts. When they came the second time they found that the Captain, hiring Outermost neighbors, had run out from the house an ell of two rooms, each fair in size, each with windows east and west, each with its own outward-giving door and with a door between.

They had matting on the floor, white curtains at the windows, good, plain adequate furniture. "Yours," said the Captain, with a wave of his stick, and "We've been so happy doing it!" said Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah, speaking together as they often did. Drury kissed the two women and shook Captain David's hand. Rachael put in turn an arm around the neck of each of the three and laid her cheek against those withered ones. "Ours, ours!" cried Ann with round eyes, and Gilbert with a shout scrambled upon the rocking-horse in the corner.

Here then, that summer, they were established, and now again this summer.

"It's coming home," said Rachael.

"Well, I should think so!" said Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah, speaking together. "It's life in the house."

And the thirty-year-old Jane Outerbridge, daughter of Jinny Outerbridge on the mainland, nodded agreement, her hand steadying Gilbert on the old rocking-horse.

Mammy did not come this summer with the family. Just Drury, Rachael and the two children. And having established his family, Drury quitted the island for several weeks, again went north to Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. This time his father met him in Washington, and they traveled further together. At home in Elderfield, Mr. Bob Price and Preston McGregor sustained the *Herald*. The native ability of Preston McGregor had by now taken him from type-setting and put him to reporting. Inside himself he knew very well how to edit. The two Ran-

dalls and he were good friends. Having provided their copy and given indications, they left the *Herald* to him and knew he would not do amiss. James put it all out of his mind and took his holiday with his son. The two had a great satisfaction in each other's company. Where they did not meet they did not quarrel but with tolerance each looked the other way; where they did meet they felt the vigor and fullness of a doubled sense. Now they traveled from city to city where James had not been for six years and Drury not for two. James' errand was to see, hear and touch, sense and savor that which lay to the north of Mason and Dixon Line, and Drury's that and also to talk with the New York publisher about his second volume of poems.

Father and son wandered from point to point, stood and gazed, sat and listened, mused, spoke with each other. They touched a variety of groups. They felt thrillings through the vast common body. Thrillings north, thrillings south, common currents and currents in conflict. Both were sensitive to such things, each in his way divinatory.

In a New York hotel, on a hot summer night, having come in late from a long, straying promenade, they sat before a window in James' bedroom. Below them a Broadway throng yet streamed by, a medley of voices and footfalls, blending into something continuous and innumerable as the sound of rapids. James smoked. They sat in silence, listening to the night. The air was hot and heavy, a storm coming up. They heard distant thunder. The crowd below began to be hurried. "Storm," said James. He knocked the ashes from his

cigar. "There are many kinds of storm. I make my guess that there is one of another kind gathering over this continent."

"Yes. Its wings will be wide."

"One America will pass," said James. "I don't know what the other will be that comes up the ways."

"No, nor I. It will be Experience and Livable."

Lightning flashed, followed by a roll of thunder and mounting wind. James, rising, put down the window.

On Outermost, Rachael and the children spent happy days, one much like the other, each with its thrill of difference from the other. The colors varied, but all colors were, as some one has said somewhere, "the deeds of light." The Captain's house, the Captain himself, Miss Sarah, Miss Hannah, Jane Outerbridge, the colored woman, Minnie by name, who cooked, Charlie Lamb who brought the fish and could sail the *Star*, the spare, sand-infiltrated garden and all that grew in it, the twisted trees, the sand, the dunes, the beach, the shells, the sea, the more peopled end of the island, the not-one-too-many folk of Outermost, the lighthouse, the lifeboat, the long wharf to run upon with the boards sounding under feet, the boats, the wheeling birds, the cranes flying with their long legs behind them, the air, the light, the voices. Ann and Gilbert danced their days through, never tired until it was right to be tired, when the sun went down, when they had had their supper, when they had felt the arms of the old cousins and Jane Outerbridge around them and had hugged back, when in their own

room with the two little beds, and the sound of the sea always, always, they were undressed and said their prayers and got into bed. Then Mother sat in a low chair between the beds, with a hand for each and began to sing . . . the sea and Mother singing — and they never heard when either left off, if they ever left off — and here was morning light and dancing again.

They had so many guardians upon the island that Mammy was not missed, and Rachael had time — sweet time — to herself. As much as to Maria — though with a certain difference of key — as much as to Drury, solitude was air to her, the air within air. She did not prosper unless there was the breath of it in her every day.

It had always been present on Outermost. The fine gold of it was there. The old people in the house and Jane Outerbridge went to bed early, almost as early as the children. When all were asleep Rachael stepped from her door and was gone to the beach that was so at hand it was naught. She walked it beneath moon and stars or stars alone. She had with her an ancient shawl and spread it down and sat or lay there, hearing the sea with the tide making or the tide ebbing. The moon traveled, the stars journeyed, she named them with her hands clasped about her knees and her face lifted, or she covered herself with the great shawl and lay with closed eyes, lapped in the eternal sound. Lying so, she saw pictures within, or heard afar notes or phrases of music. Even were it overcast, or if the wind blew with a steady drone, she went as far as she might. But it was summer and chiefly they had starry nights. She drank the wine of Outermost and

the sky. An hour so, then return and her lamp and in the quiet room her children asleep. She undressed, she kissed them, she put out the light and stood by the window. "Drury —"

Or it was day and Jane Outerbridge or Charlie Lamb had the children. Again the beach and a longer walk alone, around the northern end of the island that was shaped like the bow of a ship. The sun shone warm, the sea made music. She sat in the shade of a dune, her arms about her knees, her dark eyes upon the sea. Across, around . . . Morocco, Egypt, Greece, the Holy Land, Persia, India, China . . . The Pacific. California. The mountains and the plains and the rivers. Virginia. Elderfield. Her dear home and the flowers in her garden . . . Outermost. Around and back again. Dawn on Outermost beach and meeting Drury. But she and Drury must have met forever, round and round the earth. The shining sand and singing sea and air fulfilled with balm . . .

Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and back in Washington. The two Randalls stood under sycamores, gazing at the dome of the Capitol.

"It's a beautiful thing!" said the elder.

"Yes. Let us keep it for us all."

"If the Gulf States and the Carolinas will. If Virginia will."

"Even if the others don't, surely she will!"

"She may. But the further South will draw and the North will push. There's a Difference and a Quarrel and there's no use minimizing it."

"There always has been and there always will be

the Reconciling. It is a function, and the cells stand and say, 'Here am I. Send me.' — So you and I and the *Herald*."

The two walked the alley between the trees. They spent another day in Washington, then parted, James for Elderfield and Drury for Outermost.

• XVII •

DRURY and Rachael made a pact for their wedding day — nine times their wedding day had come around. Both were by nature early risers, but to-day they rose with the first thrill of light. They dressed and touched with their lips the foreheads of the sleeping children, and softly left the ell of the Captain's house that was their own.

Outside the larger stars still reigned. In the east hung a great planet and a senescent moon. The air was still, the sea just breathing, the curve of the beach a milky white. In a few steps they gained it from the house. Rachael had a dark shawl about her and Drury carried another over his arm. They walked with quick, light steps, seeing well enough, knowing well enough their way, until they came to a certain low dune. Here they halted and he spread the shawl and they sat down, their shoulders against the heaped sand, their legs bent beneath them, a left hand and a right hand seeking each the other, resting each with the other. They did not speak but watched the stars. Aldebaran arose in the east, Altair went down in the west, Fomalhaut shone in the south. Phosphor and the boatlike moon prevailed over all. Beneath the planet and the moon, between these and the sea, had begun a faintness of light; no color, only the hint of light. All the island, the ocean

and the heavens, lay in the very cup of quietude that yet knew of a most subtle, stealthy and solemn approach. The man and woman sat quietly, resting lightly against the heaped sea sand, their hands linked, each wrapped to the point of bliss in the atmosphere of the other, yet with the spirit abstracted, in the courts of dawn. There came a second ripple of light, but no color yet or only a vagueness of ivory and jade, with the silver moon-boat and the silver star. But now the morning breeze began to stir, bringing from the sea a low and dreamlike voice. Three gulls passed, flying low, white in the thickening light. The large stars closed their bright, fixed eyes. A bar of purple crossed the eastern sky. The moon and the morning star ceased to glitter, becoming softly white. Dawn was born.

Rachael sighed, loosed her hand, then turning pressed her cheek against Drury's shoulder. He put his arm about her, drawing her close. Presently she sat up and took his hand again. "Wedding day," she said. "Wedding day — wedding day. It sounds like sweet bells, like a chime. Nine years, but why should we measure? That's only for the world's convenience. It will always be 'now' with you and me. This is the beach and this is the dawn and this is our meeting. Forever old, forever new — forever old, forever new. That is our song, yours and mine. And all that followed and follows and will follow. A thousand, thousand matters. Not to speak of Ann and Gilbert. Forever with them and they with us. . . . Somehow we shall all be cared for . . . putting our own shoulders to the wheel . . . I don't know what I am talking about.

It's curious . . . But there will always be dawns."

She rose from the dune and Drury with her. Again the light had increased. They went nearer the sea, the tide going out, and began to walk the smooth, gleaming sand. Coral was in the sky, the cleanness of the world in the moving air, in their hearts love; the married pair, the attuned.

With more and more pageantry the sun was announced. Finally he came up in might and glory. His beams made intensely white the house to which they were returning, so much so that it seemed in its turn radiant. In vision their children flowed forth to meet them, and the old people whom they loved.

The Outermost days dropped away. They were all so simple, spacious, thronged and happy. Ann and Gilbert drank nectar and danced with every hour. Even the dull hours were not really dull, and if there were ever childish tears, rainbows followed them. The two went fishing with Charlie Lamb and Jane Outerbridge; they went to the lighthouse and climbed in the lifeboat; they played with the children of the island and had supper at Jerry White's. They bathed in the sea with Father and Mother, Father holding them above the white surf as it broke, Father teaching them to swim. They sailed in the *Star* with Father and Mother, they gathered their own shells and made their own games on the beach. When the dark came and the lamps were lighted and the driftwood fire burned, Jane Outerbridge played old games with them. She had a gift for making shadow pictures. Gilbert screamed with delight at her rabbits and deer and flying cranes upon the whitewashed wall. In the day-

time, when Ann was tired of play, she sat upon the doorstep near the captain in his armchair. "Tell me another story about the *Merry Star*." When the Captain took his slow walk the length and back again of the sun-drenched path, Gilbert stepped out with him.

The summer fled, week by week. They were going home in mid-August. Then as the time neared, Gilbert took some sickness that was not serious but kept him in bed for a fortnight. "Best not travel with him until he gets his strength back," said the doctor whom they fetched from the mainland. "Of course not!" said Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah and Jane Outerbridge, and the Captain nodded his head. They wrote to Elderfield that they would be kept into September. It was mid-September finally before they thought that all was well and they would go.

"You may be right," said the Captain. "The weather's changing . . . Stay quietly here all of you till it's over."

But Drury thought and Rachael thought that they should cross ahead of the weather.

Even the morning that they went the Captain was not certain. "Better stay —"

But the sky seemed very clear and the air gentle and the water still. They said a fond and clinging farewell to the household they were leaving — the women part of it and Charlie Lamb all at the landing with them. Will White and the boat would take them and their luggage to the main. There a hack would meet them and they would drive through the soft afternoon until they came to the village, where they would

sleep that night. The next day the small steamboat, the *Meherrin*, would take them across the Great Bay to Old Point. After that, the long, land journey, Richmond first, and so on and on by train and by stage westward to their mountains. The children liked the programme well; they loved to travel — and Drury and Rachael too were young.

Will White's boat pushed off, and Will, with Drury helping, raised the sail. The air took it, the water widened between them and the landing. "Good-by, Good-by!" cried all who were gathered there. "Come again! Come again!" "Good-by, Good-by!" called back Drury and Rachael and Ann and Gilbert. The air was light but sufficed for an easy gait. Outermost grew small and smaller; the houses, the lighthouse, the very island dwindled and whitened away in the sun, now a third of the way to his zenith. "Good-by, Outermost!" — "Good-by, Outermost!" cried the children.

They were all very comfortable. It was going to be a long way over, stated Will White.

"I have never seen a clearer sky," said Drury.

"I'd call it a weather breeder," said Will. "The old Captain thought so too. But I reckon you're well ahead of it."

They made slow progress. "Make it go faster, Father! Make it go faster, Will White!" cried Gilbert, then took from its basket his toy horse and made that gallop instead. In an hour the wind declined to light puffs and the water became glassy. They crept along in a miracle of brilliant light and drowsy ease. "It's like a dream," said Rachael, "A drifting dream and the picture not yet formed."

"It's very warm for September," said Drury.

"September's always a kind of strange, in-between month," answered Will White. "When we get it hot like this, the old Captain says it's often because there's a big weather rumpus in the Caribbean and it's pushing off to us a bale of West Indies' heat. He's got curious notions but there's usually something in them."

In another hour they were only midway. "I'm hungry, Mother," said Ann. "It's been ever and ever since we were on Outermost."

Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah and Jane Outerbridge had provided a quite large willow basket filled with good things to eat and drink. The Randalls had meant to have their luncheon on shore, under the pine trees. But now they ate it in the boat, in what shadow they could get from the sail. Ann had her eldest doll along. Her name was Rosalba, and she sat propped against the side and watched all things with blue eyes. Luncheon over, as still they were a long way from land, the children went to sleep, Ann beside her father, Gilbert with his head in his mother's lap.

A long way behind any average crossing, at last the pine trees of the mainland rose before them and grew taller and taller, and they neared the gray sun-baked landing, solitary save for the negro driver of the hack, a lounging white man and a boy fishing. Drury and Rachael waked the children, the boat drew in, they lowered sail and flung a looped rope which the lounging man caught and slipped over a pile-head. Now they were alongside, and Drury sprang out and turning, lifted the children forth, then took Rachael's

hands. For a moment the gaze of each melted with laughter into that of the other, then, all light and quick, she stood beside him. The Negro and Will White managed the bags and baskets and the two small hair trunks. Ann and Gilbert danced upon the weathered boards to waken themselves up. The hack and two strong horses waited at hand in the sandy road, under the shade of tall pines whose fathers, anyway, stood when the Indians were here. The day was still of a remarkable clarity, all distances near, the air hot and dry.

They bade farewell to Will White, he to them. "But you'll be coming to Outermost next summer —"

"Maybe. Or the summer after."

"Don't you be growing out of knowledge, you young ones!"

Will would stay ashore to-night and return to the island to-morrow. "Good-by — Good-by — Good-by!"

The strong horses and the ancient hack moved in sun and shade down the sandy road. Miles, a string of them, to their port. The bright, still, hot afternoon wore on. They passed houses and fields and they went through woods. They greeted and were greeted by folk afoot or on horseback or in some kind of vehicle. Sometimes they had a sight of salt water, and then again would be only country and trees. The strong pine fragrance mingling with the sun filled their nostrils. It was drowsy going. The children slept and waked. Now and again the Negro would halt the horses and they would get out, to the delight of the children, and walk a little way. The tall trees and their fragrance and the sandy road and the clear day.

Then in they climbed again and plodded on down the Eastern Shore.

The driver was genial. "Yass'm, mighty hot weather, hit sho' is! Maybe hit's gwine break directly. We sho' needs rain. Git up, William! Git up, Crawley!"

The miles sifted slowly by. The sun passed into the lower heavens, the shadows grew long. The children revived and began to expect their stopping place. The sun's huge ball dropped from a cloudless sky, the pines turned black, the long, cohering, cricket sound began, the old earth voice. A golden, a purple, a greenish glow clung to the west, then day faded away.

In an old-time, rambling tavern the children, when supper was over, went at once to bed. An upper porch stretched without the bedroom windows. The windows other than their own were quite dark; they seemed the tavern's only guests to-night. Drury and Rachael walked up and down, walked up and down, in the yet warm evening air.

The next morning, when they looked out of window, they found that the weather had changed in the night. The air was warm and still, but there was no sun and the sky an even, high-roofed gray, broken here and there by a curious greenish light.

"The weather is on the way," said Drury. "Its very still. After breakfast I'll go to the waterside and find some authority to talk to."

He went. The *Meherrin*, steaming down the Chesapeake from Baltimore, with various landings to touch at and a fine indeterminacy about her schedule, was not looked for before afternoon. Rarely, she appeared a little earlier than looked for, less rarely a good deal

later. "But she'll get you all to Old Point before the dark's been long on you."

"What do you think of the weather?"

The experienced eye regarded the roof of things. "Well, if you ask me, I'll take my oath that somewhere there's a stir. September's a pernicky month. Sometimes we get a side-sweep from hurricanes away off South. Maybe there's a side-sweep up there. Maybe not. My years have taught me to go easy prophesying. Sometimes prophecies just wander off and nobody hears what's come to them. Maybe it ain't nothing much."

"Do you think that whatever it is will break before night?"

"It might, but then again it mightn't. It may be just like that to-morrow morning. It may be like that all day to-morrow and then go smiling off. Or something different might happen."

"The *Meherrin's* a good boat."

"Always had that name. She's lived a long time. She'll aim to get you over in three to four hours."

He returned to the tavern. "We won't decide until just before the *Meherrin* is due."

"Oh, I don't believe it will be bad!" said Rachael. "And we need to get on."

"We'll wait."

The day wore on. They walked about with the children and rested on the tavern porch or in their own room. It remained very warm, the air quiet, the great bay before them, dull of hue, with a very slight, long, oily swell. Drury, Rachael with him — the children sleeping on their bed — went again to the wharf.

"Well, sir, if was me and my family, and I wanted to get on," said the authority, when he had rid his mouth of tobacco juice, "I'd take the *Meherrin*. And I reckon I'm caring as much as any man for the safety of my family. 'T ain't, you know, as though you were crossing the Atlantic. And a steamboat don't have to stand and whistle for a wind. At the same time, I don't want to be advising you."

"Let us go on, Drury," said Rachael. "We must."

They were at the landing, children and luggage and all, when at three in the afternoon the *Meherrin* was sighted. She drew toward the landing, a little bay-and-river steamboat, of an early pattern, where in this century no patterns were very old. Besides freight of sorts, she fetched and carried as many as twenty passengers at a time up and down and across Chesapeake Bay. That was her sea-path. She was rather old but stanch, rather dingy but with a reputation for trustworthiness. She and the Chesapeake — and that was an uncertain and easily ruffled Great Water — knew each other mighty well. Now her deep whistle blew, and she approached and was made fast to the landing, and her gangplank was out. Three or four passengers came ashore; there seemed half a dozen remaining on board. No great amount of barrels and bales were in process of being transferred. Negroes handled them with volubility and laughter, and one was singing.

The Captain came ashore. The authority whom Drury had consulted met him. "Evening, Captain! — Captain, this air Mr. and Mrs. Randall, for Old Point. They got their children, and he feels to have some consarn about the weather."

The Captain, a stout experienced man and cousinly at the least to every passenger, considered that they needn't really worry. "If I thought anything amounting was coming quick, Lord! I wouldn't take any passenger whomsoever across Chesapeake mouth. All of you would just have to fix yourselves here and wait for the *Patapsco* that's coming along in a couple of days. If I take you I don't think it, that's all."

He looked again at the water and the sky. "There's weather that you might call weather somewhere to the south'ard. We may get the tail of it, but it's my calculation we won't get it just yet. — Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Randall and Mr. Randall and you two chicks." He turned away. "Boys, you hurry up that there freight! We're late now, and I don't want it to be later!"

· XVIII ·

IT WAS past four ere they were away. They had before them three hours or more of passage; on the right hand the great northward penetrating arm of the ocean that was the Chesapeake; to the left the opening wide and blunt between the capes to the sheer Atlantic. The river James was five miles wide where it thrust its current into Chesapeake; there entered also to the northward the mighty York, the Rappahannock and the Potomac. Always at best occurred contrary motions in Chesapeake. Let tempest add itself and it might be whipped suddenly and completely into a fierce and dangerous sea. But now, quitting the end of the peninsula that named itself the Eastern Shore, the *Meherrin* met only a slow, oil-smooth swell. Mid-September afternoons were short; moreover, the cloud roof hiding the sun with a completeness darkened the day. But the *Meherrin* went steadily, and after all three hours and maybe a little more were not long.

An hour passed. The air still held its unusual warmth. Drury and Rachael and the children sat on deck, in an angle sheltered from what wind there might be. The six passengers besides themselves were half of them below in the saloon. The three remaining, Baltimore merchants with affairs in Norfolk, had

settled themselves in another corner, where two of them dozed and the third kept figuring with a blank book and a pencil.

Gilbert had gone to sleep in his mother's arms. But Ann kept awake and when she was weary of the education of her doll fell back, as she always could, upon a story. "Tell me a story, Father!"

"Which one?"

"Tell me about Hercules, and then about David and Saul and Jonathan."

Another hour passed. Suddenly the wind was blowing and the whole of twilight seemed to fall at once. Rachael raised her head. "Oh, see, Mother!" cried Ann. "Gilbert's cap has blown away!" She started after it. A roll of the boat sent her against the side. Drury, springing after her, brought her back unhurt. The Captain's step came somewhat hastily along the deck. "This is a long way sooner than I thought. A man must just say when he is mistaken and leave it at that.—Mr. Randall, you had better take them below."

In the small saloon the lanterns were lighted; each of the cabins had likewise its small lantern. Gilbert woke and began to fret. "I will give them something to eat from the basket and then let them lie down in their clothes," said Rachael. "Go on deck if you want to. I am all right with them."

So suddenly and so strongly had the situation changed that Drury must hold to the rail of the companionway and found difficulty in opening the door forth to the deck. Outside he received a dash of spray and became aware of a screaming wind that bent him

sideways. It was grown very cold and dark. A man, a seaman, ran past him, shouting something to another. There were lanterns, but they swayed and momentarily appeared extinguished, then came again. So strange are all things and processes that amid the change and discomfort, the awakening feeling of responsibility and anxiety, Drury was suddenly to himself quietly moving on the slopes of Old Cherokee Mountain, in a serene twilight, and the lamps of fireflies appeared and were extinguished, appeared and were extinguished. Nor was he alone; Rachael and the children were with him, although for some undiscerned reason, he could not quite envision them. The instant, profound and precise, was and was not, like the coiled lightning. He was here and now, with Rachael and the children, in a small boat, out of sight of land and a hurricane had dispatched their way a portion of its force.

He could see no one of whom to make inquiry — if there were any use in making inquiries. While he stared into the moving, the attacking darkness, a wave struck the boat with power to make her tremble. Again there was blinding spray. The steward appeared beside him. "Captain's orders, sir! Passengers must keep inside."

Back in the small space above the dimly lighted companionway he found two of the Baltimore merchants. "Well, what do you think of this?" demanded the one; and said the other, "Some day they'll keep a telegram spinning ahead of these damned Southern storms!"

They wore their greatcoats and slouched hats; they

looked troubled, although the second made a parade of not being so. "Hawes is a good captain and we're halfway across —"

"This bay," said the first, "can turn into a demon while you're saying the Lord's Prayer."

Drury descended to the saloon. The colored stewardess was talking to two frightened women. One clutched at him as he passed. "Is it a very bad storm, sir? Oh, do you think we are going down?"

Drury smiled at her reassuringly. He stood above her, blue-eyed, tawny-haired and strong. She was a woman used to feeling Providence in a man's presence. "It's a tempest, no use blinking it! But we've a good captain and a good boat, and not so many miles to harbor. The *Meherrin's* probably not frightened by what frightens us. So say a prayer for all folk at sea and don't worry!" He smiled down upon her, and Drury's wide smile, half quizzical, half beautiful, was one of the things about him that they who loved him liked. She said "Thank you!" and sitting up, began to twist together her loosened hair. He went on to his cabin, to Rachael and the children. The children slept, covered warm, with pillows about them. Rachael sat beside them, wrapped in her long cloak, steadying herself in the tossing of the ship against the white partition. Her eyes sought his. "It's pretty bad?" — "Yes, it is, but I do not know that there is immediate danger. . . . Those who go down to the sea in ships must expect their share of it."

"Yes. I think that you would have stayed ashore to-night but I must have it the other way. I don't know why now. It was as though I was a child and

there was something glistering — And now I'm sorry."

He sat down and put his arm about her. "'Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge.'"

She rested against him. "I love you."

"I love you."

"I always will."

"I always will."

The storm rose from stair to stair of determined fury. The lift and plunge of the *Meherrin*, the untoward noises, increased. "I must go again and see."

"Do not stay."

He passed through the saloon. The two frightened women and now the stewardess with them were there with hidden eyes, crouched upon the floor among fallen cushions. By herself sat an old woman, her hands rigidly clasped, her eyes lifted and from her lips coming a stately, audible prayer. She was not like the others, but knew exaltation. Drury's mind was working quickly and lucidly, receiving and sorting picture after picture. As he went by her, she turned into Great-aunt Patsy Randall. The three merchants who held no relationship to the women in the saloon he found dolefully huddled above the companionway. The steward was there likewise for solace. The thunder of the sea, the loud, interminable hurricane voice, made human speech idle and painful. For an instant he managed partly to open the deck door, but night and water and wind at its top notch closed it in his face with a shuddering clap.

The merchant to whom he had talked earlier now spoke. "No doing anything there. I've made this trip

twenty times, I reckon, but I never saw anything like this."

"Hurricane south, involving us," said another briefly.

Drury stood with knitted brows. "I've my wife and children with me. What do you think, anyway?"

"I'd say anything might happen, even riding through it. Live in the minute — I don't see anything else to do."

Drury returned to the cabin. "We're an unknowing lot. There's danger certainly — how much I cannot tell. Darling, I wish you and they were on Outermost, safe in the Captain's house!"

Rachael looked at him, and suddenly it was the beach of Outermost, the fresh and tinted dawn, and her light and flying figure. "I've known of storm and death at sea all my life. I have seen broken ships and bodies washed ashore. And I always saw the missing thing that was safe."

He touched her. "I know you have . . . I, too." They sat together, their hands clasped, the children before them in a blessed sleep.

Some one knocked loudly at the door. Starting up, Drury opened it. Said the steward, "The Captain," and moved aside. Drury and Rachael stepped into the saloon. The three merchants were there, the two terrified women and the stewardess, all gathered in the light of the swinging and swaying big lantern. The old woman who had minded Drury of Miss Patsy Randall alone kept her place. Before them, a portentous figure, big and gleaming wet in the lantern ray, stood the captain of the *Meherrin*. He lifted his

hand and the started questions fell away. He had a bloody rag about his hand and his voice was hoarse from shouting orders. "I'm sorry to have to tell you, one and all, ladies and gentlemen, that the ship's in great danger. She's being driven out between the capes, I'm thinking. The sea's growing monstrous, and there's shore and bar enough to be beat against. — You might come to the top of the companionway. There's no going on deck for you — not till the last minute, anyway. I'm sorry. Bravely and quietly now. I look for that from us all and I know I'll get it." He was gone.

Drury and Rachael wrapped the children in their blankets. Gilbert slumbered still, but Ann was awake. "What is it, Father, what is it?"

"It's a big storm, precious. We think it better to sit all together upstairs. Keep a brave little heart and think of a great angel with its wings around us."

He lifted her in his arms. One of the merchants stood in the door. "Mrs. Randall, let me carry the boy."

The ten of them, with steward and stewardess, filled the space at the top of the narrow stair. The *Meherrin* shivered and shook. Wind and sea made noise enough; the passengers were quiet. Gilbert had waked and cried, but Rachael hushed him in her arms, drew the blanket so that it was dark and warm, crooned to him — he was ready to sleep again. Ann sat in the curve of her father's arm, still and wide-eyed, her hand lost in Drury's. Now and then some one spoke, but there was no outcry or blind panic. The old woman rested in an exaltation of spirit. Once or twice she spoke earnestly to the two women who had been so

frightened. Drury, observing her as in the clarity of the hour he observed everything, experienced again a shifting sense of Aunt Patsy in her place, but Aunt Patsy standing, impassioned, filled with the Voice, preaching Repentance and the bowing of knees. — His mind stated that death was at hand; what he felt was the very quiet of that imminence. If he prayed, his prayer was, "Let us go quietly together — let us wake quietly together!"

An hour passed. One of the merchants looked at his watch, holding it so as to see its face in the dim light. As he snapped to the gold case, there rose from the deck without an appalled and appalling shout. "Breakers ahead!"

They were outside now on the steeply sloping deck of the *Meherrin*. The boat had struck; she was held for the fury of things to break apart. The Captain battled his way aft to the knot of passengers. "It's my belief we're on No Man's Shoal. Unless we can get her off, and we hardly will, it won't be long. When the seas take you, cling to what floating thing you can. If it's No Man's, there's a beach no great way off, though it'll be covered to-night." His voice came thin and elfin; he was gone from them back to his duty.

The passengers of the *Meherrin* with the two servants of the ship now knew the change that was before them, and faced it with courage. The old woman who was like Aunt Patsy Randall got as best she might to the two women traveling together and the stewardess. She put her arms about the one who had not been able to control her fear. "I'm your mother,

child — think that I'm your mother. The mother of the three of ye. God's here, just as everywhere. It'll be over directly, and it's forever been said it ain't a hard way to go. — 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' "

Ann, in Drury's arms, put her lips to his ear. "I can swim, Father. So can Mother."

The merchant would keep Gilbert. "I'm a good swimmer. I'll save him if I can, Mrs. Randall."

Without long waiting, in the black night and the broadside of the sea, the *Meherrin* went to pieces. The shore of this part of the world was not so far from No Man's Shoal, but on this night too far for most of this company.

Drury was battling, swimming somehow, Ann with him. "Hold so — hold this way, my child!" As the ship parted, he had touched, seized, given to Rachael a board. For a time she seemed in the thick night to be beside him. Once he held her and Ann both against a wave.

The night was double night, the sea furious, the land removed.

With the break of day that hurricane that had made this war of air and water was dispersed and gone. The heavens changed from gray to a stainless blue, the air breathed sighingly, the sea, still high indeed with a thunderous surf, yet saw quiet ahead. Upon the sandy beach, above the white, inrushing lines, huddled, half-drowned, two hurt in some way, and all at the point of exhaustion, a third of the crew of the *Meherrin* and three out of her ten passengers. The Captain was not with them. The mate had dispatched

one of the seamen through the pine wood behind the pallid beach, in search of the nearest house and folk, a wagon for the hurt, a doctor if he could be had, and men to help in the search up and down for bodies washed up, some maybe with life yet in them. The seaman was gone, running and walking. The wood was not deep nor the two or three houses far.

Four men of the *Meherrin*, two out of the three merchants, the old woman and the stewardess — those were they upon the beach. The air clung still and sweet, the silver east changed to the purple, the purple to the carmine. One of the merchants, one of the seamen were hurt and lay upon the sand. The old woman sat beside them and still she prayed. The remaining men, with the stewardess, a powerfully built woman, moved nearer the sea and up and down the beach. The light was now strong enough. Before them, at what now seemed so little distance, they could make out No Man's Shoal, but no part of the *Meherrin*. The tide had been full and was now ebbing.

Moving so, up and down, they came upon parted timbers, and a few moments later to the body of the Captain. The life was gone. They left a man beside it, and still the others walked and watched. The stewardess cried out. A man lay at the sea's edge. They drew him forth. "It is Randall," said the merchant. "Dead." They thought him so, but the mate, kneeling beside him, his hand within the shirt, said, "No, the heart yet beats."

He lay unconscious, under his outstretched hand a child's ribbon.

There came no other body ashore, living or dead, from the *Meherrin*.

· XIX ·

SEVEN months and many a rolling mile from a September wreck Old Cherokee woods and Old Cherokee Mountain wore their spring dress, their early, not their late, spring dress. They had sung their autumnal song and their winter song and now again they were at their spring song. Only the earliest trees showed any leaf. Save only the immutable, cone-bearing ones. The pine and the hemlock and the cedar kept their somber, unshaded hue, and so did the shrub world of rhododendron and the smaller laurel. The old ferns wore a rusty green and so did the moss, but the young ferns were ready to uncurl and the moss to renew its velvet. The deciduous forest professed a cloudlike promise, a swelling of bud, a young, amethyst, ecstatic dream. The sun had just entered Taurus. His warmth was present, but not his man-strength. The flowers were the early wild flowers. The Judas trees, of which there were many, were robing in purple lace, but the dogwoods had only half-spread blooms of moonlight dashed with emerald. The streams possessed hoarse voices and a rushing gait; the song birds were returning. The earth felt springy beneath the foot; in the open glades young butterflies disported themselves and the hum of bees prevailed.

How many springs had Old Cherokee forest known! a countless number. And Old Cherokee Mountain, long, even-crested, strong and bold, — how long, how very long, had he lasted? No man might tell. Once the sea had been about him and over him. Perhaps he might remember an island that was then his brow and crown. But the sea had long fallen away, and he stood in the element air, though with water too at his command, and in his vitals fire. He was nearer now to the sun. And his rock and soil, his gush of springs and the resultant streamlets, snow-fed and rain-fed, that found their way down his long slopes and afar to the resounding ocean, his king's mantle of old forest and the creatures that dwelled therein, his sound and light and taste and touch and fragrance, his intercourse with day and night and the four seasons, his muteness that was not mute, his steadfastness that was but a frame for an infinity of motions — perhaps all that and more was dear to the old mountain, dear and his own, his very life. Why not think it and maybe feel it? And he had known human beings, a many and a many, through the centuries and the millennia.

Old Cherokee had a good height for the Virginia Appalachians. He ranged long and mighty, bold and strong, with furrowed sides, cliff and ravine, but against the sky even-browed, without tower or turret. Down one of his ravines went shouting and playing or slow-wheeling in dark pools Tumbling Run, that joined Cherokee Creek that joined Old Cherokee River, that joined the James that poured afar, so deep and wide, into Chesapeake Bay, that opened, between the capes, into ocean that parted continents.

On a Sunday Drury Randall climbed a slope of the mountain, making toward the top, having a fancy to do it that day. Seven hundred feet up he caught from Elderfield the church bells and sat down to listen. A spring haze half withdrew, tinted with all remoteness, Elderfield vale and town. The bells came faintly, but he could hear them. Nearly eleven, Elderfield going to church. Time out of mind and place beyond counting, churches, mosques, temples — swinging bells, muezzins on top of minarets, temple gongs or horns or shells — time out of mind and concentric rings of space. He sat and listened; it was not long, the bells ended; he got to his feet and climbed on.

He was thirty-three, Drury Randall, widower and childless, possessed of a house and a hundred acres and two or three servants there below, built around with a father and mother, sisters and brothers, friends, neighbors and acquaintances, to say nothing of some millions of fellow countrymen, and a billion or two of world-kind, and with Nature. *Rachael, Rachael! Ann and Gilbert!* . . . It was a good profession to be assistant editor of an old, esteemed paper. And then — his private affair — to make poetry that indeed he could get published, but little of it sold, for which he did not care, or no more than need be. Drury Randall, who had much of good fortune as fortune is counted, and one great tragedy as tragedy is counted, who loved a book, who loved this mountain, who had a sense of the common affairs of this world. . . . *The sea — the sea is too high! Rachael!* . . . who also loved solitude — the other name of solitude was spirit — who

was filled with contradictions that forever he strove to reconcile, and all that he could gain were harmonies, not Harmony. . . . *Rachael!*

He had climbed above a thousand feet, achieving the base of a long defense of shattered rock, weathered cliff and poised boulder. Again he seated himself, his back against a pine through which the wind sighed. Hereabouts the earth had a rough covering of last year's leaves. Glancing aside, he made out a half-buried low mat of trailing arbutus and drawing himself to it over the earth, brushed away the wintry cover. Tufts of rosy bloom were under his hand, the delicate, unforgettable fragrance streamed through the nostril and pierced the heart. This time last year, up the flank of Old Cherokee, had come four, looking for trailing arbutus. Not so high as this, the children could not climb so high. . . . *Oh, my children! Oh, mine own —*

He turned and covered his face, lying upon the earth, beside the small pink flowers. Old sun mounted toward noon. Down in Elderfield, in the three churches, three pastors took three texts and earnestly preached, while three congregations divided themselves into the whole, the half and the one quarter listeners. In the Baptist church Miss Patsy Randall, now an aged woman, sitting rigidly still, fingers knit in lap, heard all that Brother William Upjohn, now an ancient man, had to say, and agreed and disagreed. When she agreed it was her habit to nod her head, and when she disagreed to shake it. She often shook it, but she loved Brother Upjohn, though she believed that God as-

surely had for him a rod in pickle. In the Presbyterian church sat Ann and Artemisia. They wore black — women putting on mourning so freely — though not the heaviest black such as should be worn for parents or husbands or children of one's own body. They would not put it off until the full year was out — for delicacy's sake not until it was a little more than out, so as not thus to mark an anniversary. Ann thought of little Ann, who had been used to going to church with her. In the house in Old Street, Maria on her sofa read the service of the Episcopal Church. She did not tire of it; it was always beautiful and more or less solacing. Drury, on his own place from which he would not remove, and both she and his father understood that and had not urged it, Drury would be working with brain or hand. He said it did him good to work and she believed it might. . . . He liked to chop wood, make fences or dig a garden. Or maybe he read, under the oak tree — she tried to see the book but could not. Or maybe he sat very still indeed, one of his poems rising before him. Or maybe he was gone for one of his long walks. That would be the best, maybe, out of all. She herself would have liked to be a walker, but it was not to be. . . . *Life's a different mesh for each, not even the silk's the same.* . . . Maybe he was up somewhere on Old Cherokee Mountain. He had told her that he often did that. As she could make images at will, she promptly saw him somewhere near the top. . . . *Grow happier than you are, my son, grow happier, and come to see through loss as through a pane of glass.*

She read another page of the service, then put it

by and lay with her hands under her head and her dark eyes closed, making images, such images as in their combinations formed music.

Drury climbed on toward the top of Old Cherokee. Beneath him, down the ravine, would be just the beginnings now of Tumbling Run, where it burst from the mountainside, where the rains and the melting snows immediately began to feed it. In the stillness its slender brawl rose to him. He listened to it one moment, but the next, to the ocean.

So high was he that there spread a great view of vales and mountains near and far, much indeed of Albany County. He was now in oak scrub and on the ground bloodroot. . . . *Dawn on Outermost and the flute afar.* . . . Again he seated himself beside a rock, his knees raised and his arms about them, his large, very strong hands clasped, his tawny head bent, his deep-set, sea-blue eyes not for Albany County nor any outward thing. Sorrow was his at its full stretch: the anguish of crying upon the lost. The sun beat down, the Elderfield churches had their benedictions and departed from their several buildings. The hourglass turned. He sat there in the oak scrub, his body moveless as an old stone image on some Easter Island top. But in the image's head beat the Atlantic in storm and wavered a ship, and every voice was heard and every touch was felt, and the silence was heard where was no voice and the gaping wound was felt where was no touch. The hourglass emptied itself; he started up and was gone from the scrub and the bloodroot. *Sorrow is tired; oh, my sorrow is tired.*

There were yet four hundred feet to the top of Old

Cherokee. He climbed them and came upon old crenelated and pinnacled rock and small, gnarled pines that struck root into crevices and fought for life up here, and to a knife-blade plateau covered with short, sweet mountain grass. Beyond it fell slope on slope, the other side from Elderfield, of Old Cherokee, falling to other hills and valleys and young rivers and mountains afar. Drury stood and watched the moods of light and shadow and the colors they cast . . . "Rachael, I know that we are not apart and our children also are with us. I know that you and they and I endure. I know it. I wish that I might feel it. But all is dead and only mental, all, all, but a wound that aches and aches and aches. I know — I would write it down — that beauty, truth and goodness are not matters that have burial on land or at sea. No, nor can any 'I' be buried. I know that beauty, truth and goodness are not subject to birth or death, and that the air they make is gladness, and that there is a land where meeting and parting are seen to be willed, and that wills do not clash but are seen to be serene and sure. I know that rhythm is not just 'one — two, one — two', but goes on to three and four, five, six, seven. I know it . . . but we are in the cave — in the cave. And now I am going to sleep a while here in the grass, for I did not sleep last night, nor much the night before."

He lay down on the grass and after a while, in the soft sunlight, slept. He dreamed, and when in mid-afternoon he waked, it was with a sense of charmed quiet and restoration springing through a long, fond and yet stately dream. He could not lift into memory

shape or event but he thought that somehow he had dreamed well and truly. He lay quite still, so as not to frighten away the hovering mood, the bird that must have been singing. The sun was halfway down the heaven, the pines and all as still, as still.

THE hourglass, turning and turning, sent spring and summer by and autumn by; leaf fall and after it snow fall, snow falling often through a cold winter; then it was spring again, then summer again, then autumn again.

Jim came home from California, a lean, bronzed Jim, assured and reassuring, redeemed, it would seem, by the empirical and pragmatic, touch and go, "a man's a man for a' that", but hide your hand, get an eagle eye and keep your weapon ready, West. "How long would he stay East?" — "Why, that depended." He had a claim back there, and jerked his thumb across the Appalachians and twenty States and territories. The Maria Lode. He smiled at his mother and taking from his pocket a gold nugget the size of a plum tossed it across to her. He wore fine clothes of a romantic cut, his hat was a sombrero. The fact that his family had not received ten letters from him in ten years troubled him not at all. The breath of distance, the acceptance of a long way between, had become his element. All the same, now that he was at home, he fell in with home ways and intimacies and said that they tasted good. He had quitted them a raw, wild, self-assertive youth. He returned, recognizably Jim, but Jim a man and disciplined by the

fairy life. The Randall sense had developed, uncovering an ancestral lode of shrewdness and balance. For all his sombrero and swing of talk, Saturn had influence in his horoscope. His mother said that he had always possessed warm feelings, and so he had, but he was cautious with them.

The morning after his arrival, he walked from one end to another of the town and was interested in it and it was mightily interested in him. "Why, Jim Randall!" — "Well, I never! It's Jim Randall!"

At dinner, "Same old Elderfield, sir."

"Same old earth," said James Randall, carving a wild turkey. "Maybe the same old universe."

"I see surface changes, of course."

"Yes. They will occur. Transpositions."

Artemisia put in her oar. "Did Indians ever chase you, Jim?" and when his narrative was ended, "Oh, just like Great-grandfather!"

"Almost, but not quite," said Ann. "Our Indians were not riders of horses. And forests are not deserts and deserts are not forests."

"No, they aren't," said Jim. "And Rocky Mountains aren't Alleghenies and Blue Ridge. And I wasn't speaking with my usual accuracy when I said that Elderfield was the identical old town. It ain't. Still I'd yell 'Elderfield!' if I met it on a prairie."

To his satisfaction he had not been at home two days before Fitzhugh appeared from Richmond, on his annual short visit to Old Street. Last year it had been with his bride; this year a child was on the way and he came alone. Jim and he foregathered.

"You can tell me things I haven't somehow opened

on with the others. Drury now. He lives on alone at his own place, but how long is that going to last? Won't he marry again?"

The younger brother shook his head. "Another man might. I don't think Drury will."

"Just about two years ago, wasn't it? I got the letters. I started to write and then I didn't. I'd help a man as much as any — I'd really do most anything for old Drury — but I never was a flowing sympathizer. Fact is, we don't write many letters out there. It's right much like that was the earth and this the moon. It's a long way coming and a long way going, and voices get lost in between. But now I'm back, the old nest gets warm again. — Drury's changed."

"Yes, he's changed and yet he hasn't. There's a lot in Drury. It just opens out."

"Of course, I notice that he doesn't sit and whine for his wife and children. But he wouldn't. You mayn't think it," said Jim, "but I'm an observer. I must have observed a good deal before I went away, for all everybody shouted at me 'Heedless!' anyhow, none of you seem strange to me, for all your changes. Naturally I didn't seem to value in those days, but you can take it from me that gold hunting and finding and losing and hunting again in a land that's got as yet precious little cotton wool, turns a man, if he's got the stuff in him, into a valuer. I see my father and mother and all of you clearer. — Well, to get back to Drury. He's over it?"

"Over it? Well, I don't know. No, I don't think he's over it. Perhaps he'll never be and never want to be. But he's a man — Drury. And there's doubtless

something, though I don't profess to understand it, in being a poet."

"I don't understand his poetry one bit."

"You aren't the only one. I can feel a kind of music in it. All mother's children, I reckon, must have music somewhere. A man at the University told me once it was of the metaphysical school."

"Does he sell what he writes?"

"Oh, a handful buys his little books. Not only in Elderfield — elsewhere — out in the world. His kind, I reckon. Ann's the one with us — and Mother, of course — who says we don't know honeycomb when we see it."

"What does Father think of him?"

"Father and he have a whole Albany County or Virginia or American Union, where they move about together. It doesn't matter much what he thinks of the poetry side, and I don't know what he does think. They're past the talking much to each other, he and Drury. To each other or of each other. They don't need it. On a big side of each they're just one piece."

"That's the way with my partner and me out there," said Jim, with another continent-crossing gesture. "Tried each other out until there's left in the pan just the pure thing. — Well, what do you make of politics? You're a lawyer and ought to have a notion. Coming east, every stage and river boat and railway train, every hotel, eating and drinking place, store and street corner I met them head on."

"I think we're meeting head on more than just politics."

"That, I find, is what Father thinks. Drury, too,

I reckon. A doggone lot of people are cheering for whatever the head on is. More and more, I noticed, with every thousand miles."

Fitzhugh nodded a handsome head. "True enough. 'Let's have a little crash! We'll think of the pieces a little later.' — Here comes Mr. Baliol Robertson. — Good morning, Mr. Robertson!"

"Good morning, Fitzhugh. Good morning, Jim. It's a pleasure to see you brothers together. Old Virginia and brand-new California. The dusty law and the gleaming mine. The First Colony and finally the South Sea." He opened his office door. "Come in — come in, won't you? I've some excellent Bourbon —"

Slipped by the September days, the October days. Elderfield gave parties, High Hill gave a party and as a matter of course, Linden. Jim, his dress more conformed, Fitzhugh seeing to that before his return to Richmond, went to them all with appetite. He was a handsome man and interesting to Albany County, which now saw that he had never been precisely a wastrel or prodigal but instead an honest-to-goodness adventurer. It beheld him gilded by adventure. The far, far, farthest West exercised a glamour over the home-keeping breed, and everybody remembered Jim Randall, and here he was transformed! One and all, the young ladies of Elderfield and thereabouts were kind to him. When he met Catharine Inglesant he began to forget a thrice-seen Spanish woman who up to now had been queen.

He stayed a week with the Kerrs at High Hill. Molly and Eskridge and the children were presently going to Richmond for the winter. Eskridge was grow-

ing an important man in the State, not in the political field, but in economic enterprise. Not that the two did not intertwine. Canals and railways, improved roads, development of mines, imports and exports at the great seaway that was the State's eastern gate, such was Kerr's dream. Under forty, he was making his combination with others of his ilk. Out of the bushel of dream was preparing to fall the modicum of reality.

He took a fancy to Jim and the younger man repaid it with a like feeling. Their ambitions, aims and judgments felt at ease together. Eskridge had a wide, geographic sense; Jim had traveled such spaces with the material foot.

On the pillared porch at High Hill: "Then you think," said Jim, "that everybody's going to turn the corner?"

"Yes, I do. Men aren't as mad as they seem."

"I met in Texas an old graybeard who swore we were going to have war."

"If we did, it wouldn't last, nor long interrupt. It wouldn't be much of a war. 'Compromise' is a word that didn't die with Henry Clay. It is absurd to think anything else."

"I've heard say that duelling is dying out. Of course, in the West, we don't fight duels. Duelling's too slow. — Well, maybe we won't secede — not even South Carolina — or if we do, the other half the range won't bother too much about it; or if they do the shooting won't be excessive, nor last till doomsday. We'll make some arrangement and adjourn for drinks."

"That is my notion. I don't say it is your father's."

"I respect my father's ideas," said Jim. "But of course there doesn't anybody know."

Molly appeared in the doorway. "Eskridge, Mr. Moore's brought that horse you wished to see. — Jim, come and look at the rooms now the carpets are up and the candles in the sconces. How long since you danced the Virginia Reel? We'll begin with it."

Rather to his own surprise Jim gave the whole winter to Elderfield. But when spring improved all travel, back he started to his West. The Maria Lode called and his partner called, and the strongest, warmest part of his nature was engaged to those two. He thought, he told his family, that he would come east and home again in a couple of years, in three at most, and they heard that with pleasure. "Let's keep hold of one another," said Ann.

"I'm old enough now to begin to see we ought to. I'll write oftener," said Jim. "You might correspond with me, Ann, not worrying, you know, if it's a mite one-sided." He looked at his sister, they chancing to be alone together in a bench under the lilacs. "You're better, Ann, than you used to be? I remember when Doctor Moon thought you might slip away. But you look and seem a lot stronger."

"I am. Maybe I'll outlive you all. Not that I want to. Or I don't want to let myself think that I want to."

Jim grinned. "You're honest. — You're attractive too, in a kind of cool, remote, clear-sighted way. Maybe you wouldn't marry because of your health. But if that's coming round, aren't you going to?"

"No." Ann picked a sprig of lilac and put it to her

lips then laid it on the bench. "I'm going to be the model maiden aunt and sister. Sometimes I hope I already am."

"You might come out and keep house for me."

"No. I shall do it for Drury, when he wants me to."

Jim was thinking back. "Wasn't there some one called Hugh — I forget his last name — that you were going to like and maybe something more?"

"Oh, I like him still and he likes me. But we hear that he's going to be married."

"You aren't unhappy about it?"

"Oh, no! . . . I have a very comfortable, cracked-pitcher life on a pleasant cupboard shelf."

"The cracked pitcher goes oftenest to the well."

"Maybe so and maybe not."

Jim was looking about him. "Yonder's where you and Molly used to have your doll house. You had tea parties with all the dolls and Catarina, and Fitzhugh and me. Sugar cakes and strawberries. Drury was bigger than we but sometimes he came too. Little cups and saucers, and the dolls in a row, and keeping Catarina's paw out of things."

"Oh, yes! We were happy children. . . . So were Little Ann and Gilbert. . . . It's something that can't be taken away."

"You're awfully fond of Drury."

"Yes, I am. . . . I loved Rachael, too. He knows it and that makes another understanding between us."

"Well," said Jim, "it's sweet in the old garden. It's sweet to-day in the springtime. The old path and the old grapevines and the old trees. — Do you know,

in parts of California, there are trees so tall you'd never guess, so high it's absurd. You might touch the skies — ”

“How far away it is! And you'll forget the troubles of the East.”

“I went down yesterday to the *Herald* and had a farewell talk with Father. That old office with that old Roman picture! He says there may come war, and for all he knows, long war. Well, if it does, and if you all get mixed up in it, why,” said Jim, “I'm coming back.”

“Oh, for God's sake, don't let's have war! What good will it do? — I want to see you again, but not that way! — It's impossible,” said Ann, and saw little children at a party beneath the flowering shrubs and on the long path between the vines.

Jim appeared to catch her vision. “Well, we quarreled as fierce as may be sometimes. All children do. Like cats and dogs.”

“I don't remember it so,” said Ann. “We fought sometimes and then we made it up again. Certainly I remember hating Molly and hating you too, Jim. Maybe I thought that I wished you dead. But I didn't know what I thought and so truly didn't will it. Children have the long, long past in them. But men and women — ” Her eyes suddenly dazzled with tears. “Sons and daughters of God — ”

Artemisia's light form appeared upon the long porch above them. Her truly lovely face — in face and figure she was more like their mother than any of them — leaned over the rail. “Ann, here are Eskridge and Molly — ”

Two or three more spring days and Jim was gone. They followed him in their imaginations across America. "Now he is at the Ohio . . . Now he crosses the Mississippi . . . He is in Texas . . . He is in those strange, colored deserts . . . He is where the Indians yet ride and they live like martins in a cliff . . . There are old Spanish Missions with ringing bells. Maybe he is taking supper with a priest . . . Now he is in California, making north to San Francisco. Now he is in all the crude, dangerous life he tells about. Jim! Take care of yourself, Jim! . . . Now he is at the Maria Lode with his partner."

Having seen him all that distance, home memory and imagination rested from him, though still he flashed out at moments, day or night. "Who forgets anything?" thought Drury. "And where does the image-maker's power stop?"

· XXI ·

THAT summer died Miss Patsy Randall. Week after week she lay ill, nursed by Mrs. McGregor, Preston McGregor's mother, who was the best at that in Elderfield and the kindest of women, and with her kith and kin coming softly into her quiet room and sitting beside her great bed, one at this time and one at another. She lay high upon pillows, under a white counterpane tufted with a marvelous pattern. There wasn't much suffering, she said, and her mind, she thanked the Lord, was as good as ever. It was Drury that chiefly she wanted. When she kept on sending for him, even when it was not six hours that he had been gone, he one day removed himself bodily from Cherokee House to the small dwelling in Willow Street and the spare room behind the morning-glories.

"I've moved in, Aunt Patsy. I thought I'd do it first and then ask you."

She lay with her cavernous eyes upon him. He was holding a purple morning-glory and now, with a smile, he kissed her withered hand and laid the flower beside it. She moistened her lips. "I don't care what you do now," she said. "Not if you mind me or don't mind me. Now that you are here, you needn't go away."

Brother Upjohn, over eighty now himself, came often to sit with her. He had been minister in Elder-

field forty years. Sunday by Sunday, she had sat in her pew and he had stood and read and prayed and preached. She was fond of him but contemptuous of his "softness." Even now she chose for him the passages to read to her, and they were not those he would have turned to himself. But he obeyed her, with the mild light upon his face. "Each knows the food he still must eat," he thought, and read the psalm she desired. She still wished to insist with him upon points of doctrine, for always she had held that he was all too undoctrinal, and when he prayed, though she closed her eyes, her brows were yet knit and her fingers tensed. "I am all right," she said. "Pray for others that we know, Brother Upjohn. — Pray for James Randall and for all of them."

James came now and again into her clean, light, sparsely furnished chamber. "Who is it?" — "It is James, Aunt Patsy. How are you to-day?" — "Sit down, James. — James, I dreamed of you last night. You had grown somehow humble-minded."

"I have brought you a bunch of flowers and some of the old wine. Won't you let Mrs. McGregor give you a sip?"

"Not now, though I thank you for it. In the ways of our first nature, you have always been good to me, James. But your soul, James — your soul! I dreamed of you last night and you were seated in a waste place and the world had crumbled around you."

Randall sat pondering; then, "If you would let me tell you now at last, Aunt Patsy, how I truly think and feel and trust, why maybe —"

But she grew excited and began to tell him instead

how she felt and thought. Mrs. McGregor appeared and with a large, kind, experienced hand made a soothing downward stroke from the gray hair under the nightcap to the long, narrow feet. . . . "Hoot, woman, lie a mite stiller —"

It was at night chiefly that she would have Drury, though she was restless if he were away too many hours in the daytime. But at night, if she could not sleep, he came softly upstairs to her room. "Mrs. McGregor, you get into your bed and go to sleep. I'll call you when I go." Mrs. McGregor went off to the tiny room opening from the larger one. Drury took his seat in the armchair that had been his grandfather's father's. A candle under a tall glass shade burned in a corner, the windows were open to the warm night, the garden scents flowed in and moths fluttered about the candle glass. "Are you there, Drury?"

"Yes, Aunt Patsy."

She might sleep a little, high on her pillows; then waking, "Are you there, Drury?"

"Yes, Aunt Patsy."

"Come a little nearer."

Drury brought the armchair from the window. "Would you like to talk?"

"No. I've got the sense that you are there."

The eyes closed but opened again. "Well, tell me something. Some kind of a story. About yourself and where you've been."

So it began. Now it was one thing, now another. Night by night, since he knew how to narrate, he sat beside the wakeful woman and narrated. At first and even afterward, he tried to tell her stories out of the

hundred thousand concerning other places, times and beings that he might have told. But she brought him back. "No, no, about yourself." So, in the moonlight or the starlight nights, in the still room with the one candle burning, while the night air brought a tide of odors clothed in their power of reviving memories, he came to speak simply and often as in a reverie of Drury Randall. He told her adventures out of boyhood — a boy's saga — relations with earth and forest and stream, with animals in a long variety and with boys, his mates and fellows. All their pranks, those that were innocent and those that were charged with mischief, the self-imposed tasks, the larks, the scrapes, the adventurousness and play of young growth, he made to march and climb and scintillate for the old woman upon her deathbed. She would not again herself lift her body from that bed, but she was not suffering except from this sleeplessness and when certain spells came on, and her head was clear. Indeed, to herself it seemed that it never had been so clear — so softly clear. Certainly, she thought, she had never grasped a boyhood before. She lay and listened, while her great-nephew, without effort, as it seemed to her, in his rather slow, easy-going speech, told her these stories.

She rarely interrupted; she who never read a story-book (except only the Bible) lay as though deep in an absorbing one. Night by night he sat in the old armchair and related, carrying her with him, now here, now there, over and through the orb of his life. She would suffer other orbs only when with his they made a binary or a cluster.

He went out of Albany into Albemarle and described the University that she had never seen. She knew little of great schools . . . except that Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He told her much of his life there, the sunshiny and the good conscience and the stormy and the bad conscience. The outside of it and the inside. Elderfield, and she too, knew that he had been, at least a part of the time, "wild" at the University. He let her see his wildness: card playing and drinking and fighting and a preposterous duel he had had. And women too, a certain woman. He was not confessing or bewailing anything; he was telling over to himself and to the old woman on the bed, and if in its place, when it happened, it was "wrong" or it was "right" seemed to trouble him little. It was of his experience.

And Miss Patsy Randall seemed to herself, while his voice went on, to slip or melt or descend or ascend into Woman, half of all things and well able to match experience with experience, having eaten, digested and built with vast similarities. . . . All her old anger with him was gone. She lay in the nighttime, with the one candle burning, with Drury's face dimly seen, only his voice that she loved going on — and all things reconciled or resolved themselves, leaving the vital point, like the candle flame, of Interest.

Drury told her stories of associates, friends and teachers. He brought into the room for her the professor that he truly loved and still did love, in whose debt he was, endlessly, and yet felt it no burden. "And I am in your debt too, Aunt Patsy, and feel it no burden."

"In my debt? No, you are not in my debt."

"Ah, yes, I am."

"Well, if you say so . . . But then, I am in your debt too."

"Doubtless — and two debts make one unitedness."

"Go on."

The dawn might begin as he ended this or that story within a story within a story. "You can sleep now — you must sleep now. I'm going to sit here with my hand touching you until you do." Within the half hour she would fall asleep and he would leave the room quietly. The next night the same thing.

He told the story of his return to Elderfield and his taking up with his father the *Albany County Herald*. And with that came a glistening newness in matters and things that she thought she had known. How many times in how many years had she entered that old place of business behind the buckeye trees! In the springtime when they lifted candelabras of white bloom, and in the summer when their broad, serrated, closely neighboring leaves provided the deepest and coolest of shade, and in the autumn when the leaves turned copper color and the great polished nuts fell from their burrs, and in the winter when they stood gaunt and the white flakes whirled in the air. How many times! And always she had felt with sternness that the place and its occupants were reprehensible. Bill Price and his ledger, and Dick Green setting type, and Preston McGregor sprawled on the back step, reading fearful literature. . . . Dick Green was dead, and Preston McGregor grown and promoted, and a boy named Crumpet sat on the back step. Of

late years she had seldom set her foot in the place. But it stood hard and fast in her memory. All the place and its devices, its orderly litter, the heaped newspapers, secular stuff, ever to be mistrusted! The house within and without was visible to her behind her closed eyelids. James Randall's office — she was in that again — and she had never before been in it without having it colored and shaped for her by the fact that James was even as Voltaire and Tom Paine. Every chair and bookcase, and that great desk, and the view from the windows of a courthouse and a store, and on the wall that picture of an admired Roman ruin — Rome that was Pilate's city, that beheaded Paul and threw Christians to the beasts, and was Vanity Fair and the Inheritrix of Babylon, and the Scarlet Woman! . . . At last, she remembered, she had stopped going to their place of business, even to cry out on them. She had never seen Drury's office — she had not wanted to. . . . And now, lying here in the dead night, listening to Drury, something was broken in her.

It seemed that the *Albany County Herald* had meant and did mean much to him. Mr. Bob Price and Preston McGregor and Crumpet sat warm and at home in his heart. And as for James Randall his father. . . . It came alive to the woman on the bed what this father and son meant each to the other. She never had known, she never had felt. Slowly and stiffly her soul began to agree that the Lord might like it so. He talked of the paper — what it stood for — its politics — its being in opposition now to a gathering cry rising louder and louder, and of what changes in earthly

fortune all that might involve. His stories — his story — one starlight night were just of the office and the paper, and its now jeopardized following, and of James Randall and how none of that would turn him. It came to four o'clock; a cock crowed beyond Willow Street; Drury said, "You will sleep now," and before long she did so. She slept and she had, she thought, a dream. There was something wonderful about that dream. When she waked in the full summer morning, with the dimity curtains stirring in the light breeze, and catbird, thrush and cardinal singing in the little garden, she lay as still as a graven image and tried to recall it. But no form returned, only a felt breath of strangeness, wonder and beauty. Mrs. McGregor entered the room. "Well, woman, and how are you the morning?"

"I don't know, Alice McGregor. Better, I suppose."

It was Doctor Moon's day to see her, who when he arrived found in the room Maria Randall. She had come in the carriage and Dinah, Miss Patsy's one servant, had assisted her up the stair. It was steep and narrow, like all those in Elderfield houses built so early as this one. Her bonnet laid aside, she was sitting between bed and window in her summery, full and sweeping dress, with a fan in her hand. Time dealt lightly with Maria. Her dark hair showed no silver, her dusky bloom continued. Old ill health had left her lame, but she was a beautiful, musical woman, and so Doctor Moon thought for the five hundredth time.

And he found Miss Patsy facing the end just the same, but with some manner of change in her old

sunken eyes and too rigid lips. "You're easier, anyhow!" he said. "Easy. That's it. 'Easy does it!' and I suppose that's a word you've hated, Miss Patsy, all your life! Yet it's got its merits, meaning just to be at ease with life, you know, and with the Major Intention and all that. — Mrs. McGregor, just keep on with the broth and jelly and a little wine when she wants it."

When he rose from his chair, Maria left her own and went with him from the room to the matted passage without. "How is she?"

"She'll not rise from her bed, Mrs. Randall. But she's still quite herself, sinking very slowly. It might be shorter or longer."

"Drury has gone to the office. He told me to ask you — She doesn't sleep till toward dawn, and sitting by her it has come about, he says, that he tells her stories of his own life and of others. When he would be silent, she will not have it. Can it hurt her?"

"No, not at all, I should say. Probably just the opposite. When we can no longer play ourselves, ma'am, some one or something must give us our variety. — You are looking well."

"Oh, I am well! Every one says how anxious and stormy are the times. I believe I should grieve and look at the black clouds more. I do find that I play graver music."

"But it's music. That's you, you know."

"Ah, you're gallantry still and always! Then I'll tell Drury to talk over things or tell her stories at his discretion?"

"Aye. I've known her a long time," said the doc-

tor. "She's been an interesting woman, though monotonous in condemnation. It's my opinion that despite her endless — what's the word? — anathemas, the two that she loves best in the world are just your husband and your son."

"I divine that you are right," said Maria, and turned back to the sick room.

"Maria!"

"Yes, Aunt Patsy?"

"Are you all well? How's Ann?"

"Very well for her. Ann's health gives us much less anxiety than it did. There are always consolations, aren't there? I had a letter yesterday from Artemisia at the White. She and Molly are much disturbed over your illness."

"Not much, I reckon. Why should they be? What is going on at that godless place?"

"Would you like me to read the letter? I have it in my reticule."

"Yes, you can read it."

Maria read in her rich, cadenced voice. Parties and clothes, dancing and serenades, riding now with one gentleman and now with another, walks along dedicated, romantic, woodland paths, meeting delightful people — on for four pages went Artemisia descriptively. At the close was placed concern for Great-aunt Patsy and love to her.

"Ha!" said Miss Patsy. "And that is world's life!"

"She mentions just once Ralph Morrison," said Maria, folding the letter. "But Molly writes that if they're not in love, then all her gift is for nothing."

With that she lapsed into one of her deep, graceful silences, sitting in the tide of sun and shadow beside the old woman, but broke it presently to say, "Fitzhugh and Evelyn and the baby are going for August to the White. Their doctor says that Evelyn and the baby should have mountain air."

"They might come here."

"Some of her family are there. And she has a love for the place. — Dear Aunt Patsy, is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, Maria."

"We all want Alice McGregor when we are ill. And I am glad that you have Drury of nights."

"I don't want to break him down."

"Don't think of that. He is only a half day at the office and then takes his sleep. — James has you in his heart too, Aunt Patsy."

"I have never been acquainted," said Miss Patsy, "with James' heart."

Maria kept silence for a moment, then, "Perhaps I might tell you something about it? There's a sadness to me about your being ignorant. . . . For one and the main thing, there's goodness in it and the love of goodness, truth and the love of truth. . . . You might have been acquainted with it, it seems to me, by now. Yes, I'm going to say this to you, at the last, after many years. You may confidently trust that the Lord understands him and is hopeful of him, even if you do not and are not. Yes, you may trust James to the Lord. — Just the nature, the extent and the comprehensiveness of the Lord, just Who is and What is the Lord, is something," said Maria, "that I've never

been certain that any of our churches quite grasp. Not my church and not yours. But I've been James' wife for thirty-five years. You need not, Aunt Patsy, fash your soul about his soul."

With which she closed her lips. Miss Patsy lay still, bony hands clasped over her breast, her eyes upon a worked text hanging on the opposite wall. *Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done.* Said Maria at last, conversationally, "It's the most beautiful summer weather! Your morning-glories are doing their best and the sweet stock is beginning to bloom. I brought you a deep plate of Ceres' thin wafers. She says, 'Tell Miss Patsy to lean on Jesus and git well.' I went into Mr. Macduffie's to buy a piece of muslin and he sent you his old, true regards. Judith Wales is enlarging her millinery shop. She says the scoop bonnets are getting so big. Ann and I are reading together Mr. Thackeray's 'The Virginians', but we do not altogether like it. You read a novel now and then — at long intervals, I mean — don't you, Aunt Patsy?"

"Yes. Just to see — . Thank Ceres for me. But tell her I shall not get well."

Maria did not attempt contradiction. She seldom did, and her feeling was not like to be that Aunt Patsy was weak or needed or craved pity. Instead she said with her rich quietness, "I know that you are ready to go. I know that you have always had high courage and that you go to a great reality of your own."

With that she began again to speak of Elderfield and family matters, and presently rose to depart. "If you don't mind — and don't I know that you don't, Aunt Patsy! — I shall come again very soon." Miss

Patsy unlinked her hands and made a movement of indication. "In that drawer yonder there's a sandalwood box. Bring it to me, Maria."

Maria brought and opened it for her. An old, fine lace handkerchief folded in silver paper covered a few objects, each wrapped in a bit of tissue. "My mother's and my grandmother's," said Miss Patsy. "After I was converted, I never wore such things. I always admired the Quakers and the Methodists and — and the nuns in that." Her long fingers that yet had strength uncovered each bit. "I've marked them, but I'm giving them to you now for reasons. That's Grandmother's topaz necklace. I wish you to send it to Artemisia. She's young and gay, and the young and gay never think they can have too many jewels. She's brunette too, like you, and topazes will suit her. Send it to her now, will you, Maria? I don't want you to wait. Write her that it's with my love and my hopes for her happiness. — The cameo brooch was my mother's. It's for Molly. She's got so much, but this is pretty enough, fastening a deep, worked collar. My mother," said Miss Patsy, "rises before me, wearing it so . . . I see that she can wear it still, though it has been in that box for many a year, and now I give it away. I see that there are wider laws." . . . She returned from that intercourse wherever it took place. "The bracelet is Mother's too, fine, soft, plaited gold with a dark amethyst. That's for Ann. The little pearl brooch I've marked for Fitzhugh's wife. The lace handkerchief was Great-grandmother Adair's. It's for you, Maria. That's all of such things I have. Long ago I gave everything else away. Take the box with you,

and send the necklace to Artemisia, so that she can wear it this summer."

Maria bent and kissed her. "Aunt Patsy, this is never the end of us and you. Whatever comes, there will be a world of it."

She went away, tapping lightly on Alice McGregor's door as she went, who found Dinah who gave her assistance down the stair and the porch steps and went with her along the short garden path to the gate where waited the carriage. "You've lived with her more than forty years, Dinah."

"Yaas, Miss Maria, honey. I was lef' to her. I's gwine tell you something. She's done lef' me free. She done read it to me out of her will. I got mah freedom and the ol' cabin yonder and seventy-five dollars a year. Yaas'm. Yaas'm!"

"I'm glad, Dinah!"

"I knows you is, honey, or I wouldn't have told you. Don't I remember when Marse James brought you to Elderfield, and you was a beauty! You cert'ny was. You ain't got a daughter to touch you. Yaas'm, thank you!"

IT WAS night again. Alice McGregor had gone to bed the house stood so still, the air came through the window in warm, fragrant pulses. Miss Patsy lay long and straight in the great bed. It had been her parents' bed she was born in it, she had lain there a babe at her mother's breast, her cradle had been set beside it. Eighty years ago — and now the eighty stretched a long, long road and a long, long while, and now they gathered themselves together and entering one another became as a little distance and a present hour. She felt rhythm; an image drifted by of a boat upon a river and a tree in its seasons.

Drury sat in the ancient, deep oaken chair. He began abruptly to tell of Outermost. "I had a letter to-day. Captain David Gilbert is dead. No one knows just how old he was — not he himself, I think."

"It is time at last. What will his sisters do?"

"The house is theirs now. They will live on there and Jane Outerbridge with them." He sat still a moment, then began to talk of Captain David and his life upon the sea and of the *Merry Star*. "He used to tell strange stories of the sea and of that ship to Ann, sitting in his big chair in the open door and she on the step beside him with her little arms around her knees. 'Tell me a story of the *Merry Star*.' I wonder —"

Miss Patsy felt a thrill about her heart. She had never, in going on three years, tried to reach Drury here. At first she said to herself that she "respected his grief." Later she took to thinking, "It is all over. He has plenty of people and affairs to distract him. The children of this world rush away from the deeps and the billows," and locked her old lips, and went out of her way to see less and less of him. Now, borne on that thrill, "the children of this world" seemed to become a brittle statement, a thin, inconsequent saying. She moved in her bed, turning herself slightly so that she was nearer him. "Go on, child. Go on about Outermost. It won't hurt you to talk of them."

"No. Not to you. I do not talk to every one nor to many."

She felt a golden pleasure. Her lips trembled a little.

"Moreover —" said Drury. He paused, then went on; "Aunt Patsy, do you remember those nights when I was twelve and I walked with you under the stars to the revival?"

"Yes."

"There was born then some understanding between us. Of the substance and the essence. It was there doubtless forever, but it came into starlight those nights. After that, nothing that you could say or do could ever really offend me. Nor anything that I could say or do ever touch to hurt the core in you, I think, Aunt Patsy. Nothing of superficial clash and mistake could affect the real being together. Clouds in however heavy a drift could not. It has lasted and lasts between us. We are akin in the center. And now

the clouds are drifting away. After these years," said Drury, "I can well speak to those who understand of Outermost and Rachael and the children. I could have spoken earlier to you."

She made an indistinct murmur. He bent to catch the words: "I begin to see that all these many years I've hugged the clouds and insisted upon a gloomy day save only where I saw the sun . . . The sun . . . I've seen it dimmed and shorn and small, but I'll never say 'I've not seen it,' Drury."

"I know that you see it. That's the heart of the understanding. You see it and I see it; I am of it and you are of it. That is the understanding — that is the I Am That I Am. And now," said Drury, "let's be on Outermost."

He told, and she lay turned toward him. It seemed to her that she was young again and thinking, feeling, moving with lovely and terrible life. Dawn on Outermost, on the beach of Outermost. The sound of the sea, and the pale sloping sand, and the morning star, and the breath of the world at dawn. Drury sat beneath a sand heap, and then he rose and slowly walked northward where the island rounded. The light had strengthened, the sun was at hand. Then he saw on the Outermost beach a woman coming toward him. Rachael Gilbert. And they met as strangers, and yet so far were they from being strangers! Wonder and delight and redoubled and eternal life, rising with that sun on Outermost.

"Rachael . . . To me, Drury Randall, she was myself and Beauty. That she was and is and shall be. She *is*. She and I *are*."

And Miss Patsy understood.

He told on. It was his gift to make out subtleties and to create the light to see them by. Simple and homely and great and true were the things of which he was telling. . . . The Parables and the happenings in "The Pilgrim's Progress", she thought, were like that.

Happening and happening and happening, and the wholeness behind them all. She traveled with him the days on Outermost. He was the story-teller for her. The beach, the Captain's house and its inmates, the island and all upon it, and what they did and what they said. The boats, the *Star* . . . Sailing, sailing, he and Rachael. Truth and Beauty and Love — and what Purposes stretching from afar and reaching afar! They knew not but they felt. Round and round, and on a day, they knew how was set their will. "So we needed hardly a word —"

That was one summer. He came home to Elderfield and took up the paper with his father. Those false starts and wildnesses of his University days dropped away. "They matched nothing now. They were shadows, and when the light is in the room —"

"But if you had not met her, Drury? If you had not met her —?"

"I would presently have put them down. I believe that of myself. Light is light, and it was breaking for me even before — But the will arose there on Outermost with Rachael. Well, the year went round —"

It was summer again and Outermost, and now his father and Ann were with him. And Hugh Ball again. Rachael and he were married. They sailed to the East-

ern Shore and then up Chesapeake to the Potomac, and so came to the old sweet plantation, the Georgian, box-surrounded house where his mother had been born. Only a considerate uncle and aunt were there. It was a blissful dream, now and forever, that honeymoon.

There was no detail of the place or of their days that she was not avid for. She was reading at last her romances, sunk in one whose characters she thought she had known. Great, rich petals were opening in and for Miss Patsy.

Romance! That was a strange word . . . though she might, and she thought she did, know spiritual romance . . . and maybe Drury's and Rachael's was also spiritual romance. Maybe all things were spiritual.

Romance — yes, she knew it — only she had denied it to others; denied the colors that light made.

Drury spoke and was silent, spoke and was silent. The night wind stirred the curtains, the garden fragrance strayed about the room, small night sounds broke and renewed their undertone. Rachael and Drury came to Elderfield, first to the house in Old Street and then to their own house across Cherokee Creek.

The cock crowed. Drury rose. "Now, sleep —" She slept until broad day was upon the world, then waked and Alice McGregor gave her her breakfast and made all clean and fresh about her. "Hoot, woman! you may be wasting away, but you look younger —"

"Loop the curtains so I can see the day, Alice McGregor. It's fair enough."

"Aye, that. Here's Dinah to sweep the room." That morning came James to see her. "Good day to you, Aunt Patsy!"

"Good day, James. How are you and Maria?"

"Well, except for the trouble of these times. But we will not talk of that. Doctor Moon says that you are a wonder of patience and steadiness, lying here."

"Humph! I've never before been a miracle of patience, have I, James?"

James smiled and, bending kissed the withered hand. "You did that like Drury. James, I want to say that I might have better understood you and Maria. I want to say that I've been too sure of understanding God Almighty's dealings with all men and women . . . where they come in . . . their part and lot."

"My dear old Aunt," said James, "we all go on, and we go on together. I hold that. There's been bread and wine in it, hasn't there? And there will be, and as we earn it, mightier bread and mightier wine. — Let us rest now in better understanding. If you have sins of omission and commission, why, so have I. But we must trust to What impels us, back of all possible mistakes." He sat with his hand over hers. "I am glad that Drury is a comfort to you."

"He is a minister of salvation!" answered Miss Patsy on a wave of exaltation. It broke and there followed moments of what seemed pondering, then, "I'll lower my tone, which I begin to see, James, has been kept too much at a shout. But Drury — Drury does mean much to me."

"Drury, being human, also has his sins of omission and commission. But it is my judgment, Aunt Patsy,

that he *is* of the ministers of salvation. There are a good many in our world."

She lay still and her nephew sat still beside her, and they both slipped into the land of memory. Pictures and pictures and pictures; pictures tending, so old was she, and he not far from an elderly man, to become alive again. At last he rose, kissed her forehead and went away to his work. The long day moved from point to point. Dinah, and Alice McGregor, and Doctor Moon, and Brother Upjohn, and Emmeline Mason, and Mrs. Webb, and the shadows of the morning-glories on the floor, and the thrush in the tree. Noon and afternoon and sunset. Dinah and milk toast and a little wine. Twilight in a mountainous country, the moon, the stars, the lighted candle, the room all ready for the night, Alice McGregor in her old blue wrapper, the shadows on the walls, Drury's step. His voice, and his story-telling beginning anew.

Young manhood and womanhood made their home in Cherokee House. They had a hundred acres, cleared and forest, and servants to serve and be served. They had garden and orchard, they had kin and friends. They had each other; home and work and play and each other. The bright, swift months sliding along the string; the ruby, emerald, sapphire, amethyst, diamond months sliding along the golden string.

The child was coming, the child was born. Ann. Then the three of them, man, woman and child, yet it was One. Another year and another, and there was born to them Gilbert. All the stories, all the light, all the warmth. . . . Home, out and on from the nest and the lair, home upward and along through the

ages. Build it, defend it, subtilize it, offer it. . . . Drury spoke as to himself, musingly, with long pauses when audible speech sank away and he sat silent in the ancient hand-wrought chair, gone within himself to lights and voices there. She did not mind his silences, the old woman. She lay in a play and interplay, a harvesting of her own. All stories were growing, with a sweet strangeness, to be her own.

There were many silences this night. Dawn broke and he bent and kissed her and went away. The day swung by, swinging slowly, like a censer, to and fro. Starry night took its place and Drury sat in the old chair. And now it was Outermost again, that last summer. First with his father north, and then Outermost, and Rachael and the children meeting him.

He told the story of the summer and its joy. Outermost rose before her whose bodily eyes had never seen it, whose imagination until these her last days had refused or misconceived it. She saw the features of the island and its folk, and seemed to herself to have known of old the Captain's house and the old Captain, Miss Sarah and Miss Hannah and Jane Outerbridge. She saw the wing that had been thrown out for Drury, Rachael, Ann and Gilbert, the two rooms, the windows with the sea and sky and sand without, the beds, the children sleeping, their playthings on the shelf beside them. The father and mother, husband and wife, lover and lover, moved without the door and sat upon the step in the last glow from the west, under the brightening stars. Or they walked in the moonlight upon the beach at hand.

He told of what they talked about. They had talked

of the immediate scenery, the immediate road of life; the immediate nest and nestlings; Elderfield and Outermost and other places, of his work and plans, of all the here and there, the now and then, the flashing facets of the eternal diamond. They had talked of what they remembered and what they foresaw. "What we foresaw was, in rest and in motion, in sound and in color, in sleep and in waking, in life and in death, being together. And we foresaw correctly!"

That summer had waned. They were to quit Outermost, and then Gilbert was taken ill and they could not go. Then mid-September, and the child was well, and they must. "A hand was upon us. 'Go! It is meant'."

He rose from the chair and moving to the window, stood there in the light from the planets and the zodiac and the fringing constellations. He returned. "Do you want me to go on, Aunt Patsy?"

"Oh, yes, Drury! Oh, yes, my dear! If it does not hurt you —"

"No, it will not. It is something I have looked at steadfastly for so long that now I see through it. It was a spear in the heart until the heart itself gave it soil and taught it to put forth leaf and blossom and fruit."

He began, "We sailed from Outermost —" On went their story, his and Rachael's and Ann's and Gilbert's, along an old road, in a strange sunshiny light, a keen fragrance of salt and pine, to a little town and an old inn there. Night went by, it was day again, an overcast day. . . . They boarded the *Meherrin*.

He spoke on in a controlled monotone. She lay sideways with her eyes upon him. The middle night entered the window and thronged the room. “. . . I was brought back. I came back to myself. I lay upon the beach. The sun shone, the wind was dead. They were gone; there was in my hand only the ribbon that tied Ann’s hair.”

He sat without speaking, then rose and went to the window and stood there. Her sunken eyes saw the posts of the bed and the text upon the wall and the unflickering candle beneath the high glass shade and all the familiar furniture. But the inner sense beheld that of which he had been speaking and telling, and beyond that sense a greater one beheld the long figured ribbon, the wide, wide country of human life.

· XXIII ·

"YES," said Brother William Upjohn, the following day, "she has been a remarkable woman! Now at the last, further grace is arising in her. It will be wings to her whither she goes."

"I have a thousand, thousand memories of her," said Drury, "and certain intuitions. They run together now. She is a window like the rest, and self-moving like the rest, and that is the great mystery."

"Aye, aye!"

They were walking in Willow Street, away from Miss Patsy's house. "Are you going to your office?"

"No. I do not feel like it to-day. I am going up on Old Cherokee."

"Aye, the mountains and a wider view. The Lord be with you, Brother!"

Drury crossed the creek without going through the house and garden in Old Street. He passed Cherokee House also without turning in at the gate and so went on until the forest was about him and the earth began to mount. It mounted and he with it, until he had topped a long, extended buttress of Old Cherokee. About him swung and sighed the deep, full green of summer, trees in their legions, leaves like the sands of the sea. Like the sands of the sea, and so were all things and events, — the sands of the sea. He chose

a hemlock and threw himself down beneath it. The moments went by in an endless fullness and quiet, every moment a grain of sand and a note of music, and every moment also a symphony and a planetary orb. The grave dark tree, and a mighty one it was, drooped its cool branches until they neighbored the dark, needle-strewn earth. They made the walls of a tent or of a temple. About him flowed the steadfast, dark, life-giving, resinous odor.

Drury lay quiet, at rest in nature, then began with his hands to pattern the innumerable, minute, purplish needles of the carpet upon which he lay. For a while he persisted in this, then letting it be, sat up with his back against the great trunk.

He was within himself consciously, gathering the inner world, consciously awaiting there formation and movement, there in its own space and time and substance. . . . The house below, Cherokee House. Rachael and the children in the garden. Rachael and the children and Drury Randall, and they wandered about and sat upon the summerhouse step, and the children laughed and played and Rachael, yes, and Drury, laughed. All things lifted and became an upper story of themselves. They became their own essence and garland.

They were here, they were there, together, in Elderfield and Albany County and Virginia, on Outermost and here on Old Cherokee. Then they further subtilized and were where they would, and when. They wore, as did all that surrounded them, all places and all times, subtler bodies and used an incomparable swiftness. Their old voices were changed to inter-

communion of being, to waves of knowledge and feeling and power. . . .

His body of earth lay there on the cool ground beneath the physical hemlock, through the temporal afternoon. After a while it passed into sleep and slept quietly and deeply, while the earth made that turning from the sun that was also, with the night between, a turning toward the sun. When he awoke, there lay before him splendor in the west.

He woke, clear and quiet from deep sleep, sat up, then rose and parting the hemlock boughs came out upon the vantage crest of the buttressing ridge. He stood with the murmurous forest around, below, and at his back, where it moved on upward to the height of Old Cherokee. Before him were gateways of cloud and a sea of gold and an orb that sunk and rose again forever and forever.

He spoke aloud. "Rachael," he said. "Rachael, they pity us too much! And maybe we have pitied ourselves too much; but now no more forever. Rachael, Ann and Gilbert—"

He waited until his hemisphere had left for a handful of hours the face of the sun, then through the rosy mountain dusk plunged downward by slope on slope to his own fields and Cherokee House, where Dilsey gave him supper. Another hour and he was in Willow Street, before him the small house with the light in its upper window. He reached the gate and passed through. An old damask rose was in bloom; it smelled sweet to-night. Entering the house and his own room, he sat beside the window until the clock, brought overseas long ago, struck the hour for going upstairs to the

sick room. It seemed now to him that his great-aunt had lain there many days and nights, though by the calendar they were not so many. She had lain there, and he had sat beside her in the faintly lighted room, in the ancestral chair, and there had been, night by night, an interchange. His story, but hers also. All story was parable; all words were bridges. Shafts into mines and wings into the skies.

In the hallway, coming from the kitchen a pitcher of milk in her hand, he found Alice McGregor. "How is she to-night?"

"Doctor Moon was here at four. He says it marks off in fractions each day, her time here below. But that's true, isn't it, from the first cradle day? She's peaceful; that's the main thing. I should have said, had anybody asked me, that Miss Patsy would have preached to the last, but she isn't preaching. — Have you had your supper?"

"Yes, at home."

He went on to the upper room. "That's you, Drury?"

"Yes, Aunt Patsy." He laid a damask rose beside her. "They smell so sweet to-night."

"What are you going to tell me about to-night?"

"What do you want? Suppose we talk about poetry and why I try to write it?"

"There's poetry in the Bible."

"It *is* poetry."

He moved to the mantel and brought back her worn Bible. "Suppose we read for a while?" Then, as she seemed to nod her head, he moved the candle and sat beside her and read, choosing the passages, turning

from one to another, the New to the Old and the Old to the New, and breaking his reading with long silences. Listening, she drank the old, sweet water. So old, so familiar, so known, so appropriated, so seemingly unalterable had been the spring! And it was so yet, but the kneeler beside it and drinker thereof was meeting detail and depth, history and meaning, with an altered comprehension. Now she had it with a diviner luster and a truer freedom. That was the gift of the brink of death.

Drury read and ceased from reading and read again. Once, out of a silence, when he had been sitting still, relaxed, a long way off and yet at hand, she suddenly spoke.

"Drury, I love you."

He put his hand over hers. "And I love you, Aunt Patsy."

"Well, read again. Read Thirteenth Corinthians."

He read and was silent and read again, until dawn trembled in the east and he left her and went down and lay upon his own bed.

The greater part of that day he spent at the office. The paper was coming out. He read the proof of his own essay for his own department. "American Letters." The proof also of "Contributions and Excerpts", after which he answered letters and wrote them for others' answering, consulted with Preston McGregor and met and talked with various incomers on various business. Finally he and James had their conversation in the latter's room under the long, broken Aqueduct stretching through the Roman Campagna.

James showed him the editorial to appear in Thurs-

day's paper. The Presidential Candidates. Bell and Everett. Breckinridge. Stephen Douglas. Abraham Lincoln. The times — the pregnant times.

Drury read, nodded, and laid it down. "It is good, Father. Ah, yes!"

In mid-afternoon he returned to Willow Street and entering quietly his room there, stretched himself upon the bed. Awaiting sleep, his observation drifted slowly from image to image. He saw the Falls of Niagara. With what deep resistlessness, with what impetuosity, with what thunders and blinding spray over went the river. . . . He saw old men, men in their prime, and young men, and women and children. . . . A New England village — Concord arose to occupy him and with a tranquil light. He saw his own figure walking in a summer wood, walking to Walden Pond, with Mr. Emerson. A poem of the latter's hung in the amber air:

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain —

Again he saw his figure —, the shape of Drury Randall — upon the balcony of a city hotel, and all the streets were thronged with hurrying shapes and endless footsteps. . . .

These were not sleep-provoking images. As he wished to sleep, he watched himself with disinterestedness as a child, a small boy moving about with a dog at his heels. . . . So he went to sleep and slept till Dinah tapped at the door and said his supper was ready. When he had eaten, he went into the little garden and walked up and down, up and down, its three paths. The morn-

ing-glories were all closed, there would be no more colored trumpets until the dew and sunshine of the morning. But the damask rose gave forth its scent. The dusk deepened into night. There shone Saturn and there Jupiter. He walked up and down, and then at the gate rested his arm upon the wood and stood there, studying the stars. A meteor dived, bearing its train of light. The lower air crumbled it but still in after-vision it darted and shone. Memory's subtle waters closed over it, and instead there rose and passed, shining, another of its ilk. That one had dived a long string of years ago, when he was twelve. He and Aunt Patsy were walking to church; the revival before him, Brother Pickering and conviction of sin, the mourners' bench and "coming through." Conversion with throes and tremblings of the body and mindless ecstasies. . . . No, not altogether that, but with a hovering somewhere of the mind and the will. . . . *Despise not the day of small things.* . . . A young boy and young growths; an old woman with her young growth standing petrified, or turning upon itself and around itself. But now that was altering and growth resuming and becoming translatory. In vision he saw the great spirals and he himself and she and all, all that he knew or could know, upon that wheeling and mounting road, carried on and on among the intense, the inward stars. That faded; again the vast, symbolic, physical heavens overarched the earth. Before him ran the quiet Willow Street, behind him stood the small house and garden. Turning, he left the gate and went indoors and up the stairs to the sick room, where

he laid a sprig of mignonette beside Miss Patsy's hand. "A good day, my dear?"

She turned her dark eyes upon him. "I like to hear you say 'My dear'."

"It's nearer the mark somehow," said Drury, "than 'my dear great-aunt'."

He laughed and took the great chair and told her of the weather and the town news and about country folk who had come that day to the *Herald* office, then sat with a book while Alice McGregor gave her her draught, straightened the bed and its curtains, wound the clock and trimmed the candle and then passed into her own small room. Drury brought the great chair to the bedside. She seemed to him drowsy.

"Sleep a little, can you not?"

"Yes, I will, a little."

She slept the better part of an hour, then waked. "Drury!"

"Yes."

"Give me a little water. I was dreaming. I want to get a little higher on the pillows."

He lifted her and gave her the water. "Are you sure you're all right? Couldn't you sleep again?"

"No, not now. When I wake, I'm wide awake. Sit there and begin to talk. Drury —"

"Yes?"

"Tell me about your father and mother. How you see them."

James and Maria Randall he drew for her as they lived in him. She listened, her eyes upon his face shadowy in the shadowy room, her thin, gnarled hands

locked upon her shrunken bosom. He talked as always with pauses in which she might rest from any attention if she would, in which he himself seemed to halt in contemplation of the preoccupying subject. When at last he left speaking of them, the room seemed to hold lightly and afar, like a sea shell the ocean, the notes of a man and a woman. Their portraits stood; he had not left out shadows and imperfections any more than he would have left them out of his own, but the very shadows held in their womb the light.

Maria and James, and she had been with them and they with her all these years. When he was done and was silent, she was so too. He left her and went to the window; without the leafy trees murmured like the sea. When he returned she said, "Drury —"

"Yes?"

"What I missed seeing, my dear, was the *fullness* of God."

He put his hand over hers. "Maybe, a little. Don't we all a little, a little? But to see our lack is to begin our wisdom."

"It's lovable, isn't it, the Creation? If the Creator is, the Creation must be so too. I don't reckon I saw that . . ."

He still sat beside her while she dropped into a short sleep. He thought that there had been a change since yesterday in her bodily condition. Alice McGregor had told him that she felt it. "I don't mean she's going — she's got a lot of strength yet — but she's a step nearer. I'll get Doctor Moon around in the morning."

Miss Patsy waked. "A little wine?" — "Well, a sip." He lifted her to take it. When he laid her down,

"James brought me that. I don't know that I thanked him enough."

"If you enjoy it and it strengthens you, that is thanking him."

She lay still a moment; then, "I reckon that is so. Well?"

"What shall I tell you about?"

"Tell me about your poetry. Why you make it and however you can do it. What it means, what good it does?"

He sat looking at her. "Well," he said, "when I was ten years old —"

The candle burned, the curtains stirred, perfume rode in at window upon the moving air. He was speaking of poetry and so that she understood. "You've known it always," he said. "Why look at your own life —"

When night and day were meeting and he left her, she said, "Kiss me, Drury," and then, "I thank you for yourself, Drury."

"There are two who can play at that. I thank you for yourself, Patsy Randall."

Without on the landing he knocked softly at Alice McGregor's door that opened there. She was already up and in her old worn blue wrapper faced him. "There's a change to-night, Mrs. McGregor. Let me know when the doctor comes."

He slept for a couple of hours, stirred at the doctor's voice in the porch without and was up.

"Aye," said Doctor Moon. "Her wagon's starting over the mountains. She may slip into unconsciousness any time now. And then it won't be long."

Brother William Upjohn came that morning, James and Maria Randall in the afternoon. Drury sat beside her through the night, silent now in the great chair. Alice McGregor slipped noiselessly in and out. They could not tell if she were conscious or no, there being no obvious response to their words. But a little after dawn she spoke. "Drury —"

"Yes!"

"I've had a good dream about my blessed mother and Brother David Montgomery, who converted me. . . . They were smiling, and I thought Rachael and the children were there too. . . . It's all right, they said, and I see it is. . . . There's a great smell of roses in this room."

It was the last time she spoke intelligibly, and two days later she quietly died.

· XXIV ·

IT WAS November and the last leaves whirling down. James Randall and his son sat in the former's office in the old brick building behind the bare trees. In a corner a stove burned redly; out of window the courthouse pillars had a pallid, dreamlike look. James was reading from a South Carolina newspaper. He read, "The tea has been thrown overboard; the revolution of 1860 has been initiated."

He read on to the end, then folded the paper carefully and put it by. Drury had been turning in his hand the little old paper weight, Napoleon in his cocked hat. He set it down.

"South Carolina will go."

"Yes. She'll go."

"And others follow her."

"No doubt."

"Will Virginia?"

"I don't know. I hope not. . . . Somebody or something arising to be the Reconciler — that is my dream. She might be. Virginia might play that great part."

He got up and walked the floor, then came back to the worn, heaped desk. "Half the State, brought to the edge of things, doesn't want secession, more than half of us west of the Blue Ridge. But there is infection strong as Niagara. A little thing — a little thing

— now to touch the quick of our pride and out we go with all the others! Again a little thing and we may stay. We might bring about reunion without war!”

He sat with his eyes upon the shadowy Doric pillars of the Albany County courthouse. “What the *Herald* can do I’ll see that it does.”

December followed November. South Carolina proclaimed her sovereignty over herself and departed the Union. January, February, March. One after another a great segment of States departed the Union. The Confederacy of the South became a fact, with a Government and a Capital. It became seen that there would likely be war. The President in Washington called for troops from every State yet within the old bond. In April Virginia held in Richmond a convention to decide.

There sat in the pillared Capitol one hundred and forty-three delegates. Fifty-five delegates, predominantly from the great western half of the great State, voted to stay; eighty-eight to depart. The bells rang, there was a great shouting, a flag was changed.

James Randall, one of the fifty-five, returned to Elderfield. He came by railway and by stage, through excited towns, excited countryside. The railway was building in Albany County but was not yet at Elderfield by a dozen miles. Drury met him at Warren’s tavern.

Not only Drury but a crowd besides. Men pressed about the tavern, the stage, the mail bags, the post office hard at hand. Elderfield and Albany County had the news, but it wanted it hot and hot, more and more. Country folk were yet in town. A meeting was set for

the courthouse. Another hour or so and the space before it would be thronged and men speaking from the steps, between the pillars. Dubitation had had its day; its day was over. Now Action; but what action as yet! Only to think in terms of train bands and militia turning into field troops; only to think wholly of the South as One's Country, only to begin to act. A new Order was upon them and Mars on the horizon. Direction now; they waited on direction.

A considerable number were in presence who had thought, or thought they had thought, with James Randall. It had been guessed that he would be back at once from Richmond. Others, and a larger number, at Warren's, had of late months opposed the voice and influence of his paper. Now they were atop, and the opposed heap was crumbling to them. Now that Virginia stood where she stood, now that there had been a death and a birth, what was there truly to do but to step over the line?

Under which King, Bezonian? Speak or die!

The State was out. All must go with the State. All must go with Old Virginia Never Tire.

But Randall was a man much respected. Those who inwardly had not changed ground welcomed him with warmth. Those who had thought and felt so and so, but were now changing, welcomed him with lesser but still with manly warmth. He also would change; what else but at the idlest of sacrifices could now be done? Those who approved the Great Decision but were themselves moderates also gave their welcome. He and the *Herald* would come over, though cautiously

at first, no doubt, saving their face. What else could he do if he wanted his paper to live? They wished to be generous, he was still James Randall, a pillar of Elderfield. No man but must be sobered by the mighty issue now upon them. Moreover, generosity to the defeated was old, stanch gospel. Therefore, "Glad to see you back, Mr. Randall! Who was it said when we were separating from Great Britain, 'We must all hang together now or we'll hang separately!'"

But there was an increasing crowd, town and country, of ardent men, chiefly young, to whom what had been done was breath in the nostril. Now they worshiped with singleness of heart the Major Voice, now they triumphed hotly. What they would do already, outrunning any command but their own, was to exclude dissent. With dead silence or with groans when he spoke, they excluded James Randall.

What he said had been short. "I am very tired, gentlemen. It has been a long, rough journey. You know the result of the Convention. I will speak of it as best I may in the *Herald*. Politically, the die has been cast. Argument now is temporarily over. As individuals each of us must now proceed to accord his conscience and his action. It is dark and I am for home. I wish you all good night."

Baliol Robertson drew him aside. "There's speaking in an hour before the courthouse. You'll return?"

"No, Baliol. I think not."

"You must, James. Just a plain recital. No longer in the fight. Just telling how the battle went and the open news. It's necessary."

"Well, I will return."

Walking with Drury to Old Street, he had his loving, consoling welcome there, got something to eat and rested for a few minutes upon his bed. Then back to High Street and the courthouse. There were a crowd and torches and Major Inglesant speaking, who had wanted it to go as it did. Way was made for him to the portico. Inglesant ended to great applause. Some one cried out, "Mr. Randall! James Randall!"

What he said was listened to in silence and with respect. At the end came a scattering fire of questions. Where strict information was wanted, he answered as best he might. An insistent voice would know, here and now, the henceforth policy of the *Herald*.

"What I believed to be best for us I struggled for," said James. "That is done. I take defeat, and it is my intent to take it without bitterness and without obstructiveness. As for the *Herald*, it will print the news. And now, friends and neighbors, I am a dead tired man. I want to sleep twelve hours on end."

With which he left the courthouse steps, his son accompanying him, and after a moment Baliol Robertson. The crowd knew that he had fought hard and honestly, and parted for him, even with applause, so long it had known him. It was at the beginning of things and the beginning lacks the real, the simon pure, exclusion. It closed after him and another speaker was speaking.

The three figures walked under the stars up High Street. Behind them, at the courthouse, the Elderfield band began to play. "What's that?" asked Baliol Robertson, then answered himself. "That's that new air, 'Dixie.' — Ha!"

At his turning, the two Randalls parted with Baliol and went on together to Old Street. They walked in silence in the spring night. Only as they approached his house said James, "Well, Drury, the New out of the Old is upon us. It is going to take fiber, it is going to take fiber, to quit us like men."

Said the son after a moment, "What I pray for is that understanding that shall light a man upon his own path and yet give no denial nor bitterness of obstruction to the paths of others. To oppose and yet not oppose — to pass the paradox of opposition."

"Ah!" said James, with a heavy sigh. "You breathe a rarer air than most. Practically to live, that rises before me, practically to live and work —"

They were at the house. "Aren't you coming in?"

"No. I'll go on home. Good night, Father!" He put his arm around the other's shoulders. "Good night, my blessed Father!"

Maria, Ann, Artemisia and Emmeline Mason waited for him in the parlor beside a low fire. Maria had been playing Beethoven. Artemisia ran to the door. "Come in and rest, Father! We won't make you talk. We'll just sit quiet and be so glad to have you back."

But when he and Maria were in their own chamber, they talked, though not volubly. Neither was a voluble person. What he said had always meaning and concision. If she was more gracefully various yet she kept afar from mere diffusion. They could truly hearken one to the other and truly consult.

The night had fallen cool and she had seen to it that there burned a fire on the hearth. His old dress-

ing gown lay ready. They sat beside a gay flame from pine knots and hand sought hand.

"Is it so bad?"

"I don't know, Maria. God knows what in the end it is destined to be. — There are difficulties for elderly people."

"Ah, 'elderly'!"

"Yes, you are right. I'll throw off this depression directly. . . . I saw Fitzhugh."

"Still the same?"

"Yes. Naturally enough, of course. Considerate, but rejoicing. He is captain of a forming company."

"Ah!"

"Eskridge came and talked to me at the hotel. 'Development under and for the new Government. Rails to be laid down as fast as may be — separate roads linked up into a system — centers developed — manufactures, stores, transportation — a head to see it all come true.' That's his service *pro patria*. He holds, and I agree with him, that sooner rather than later the Capital will be removed from Alabama to Richmond."

"Yes, Eskridge. . . . And Molly — without the head — holding hotly with him. . . ."

"I met Hugh Ball upon the street. He, too, thinks in terms of engineering, but more simply than Eskridge. He sent his affectionate greeting to every one. It was mistaken news — his going to be married. He says he never thought of but one woman and she won't have him. — He'll enlist in some Engineer Corps."

"It grows like the fabulous beanstalk. All in a few days —"

"Ah, when the pattern has been growing so long, it fills in easily!"

They sat, hand in hand, before the fire. "Is war coming, truly, truly coming? But it won't last? It couldn't do that—we are too far on. And turn it and twist it as we may, it will be in a way among ourselves."

"Yes. Behind everything, essentially, it is a civil war. It has always been said that they are the worst. And how long? Many are afraid it will be over before they can get into the field. I think they'll find they'll get there."

Silence again. Then, "I'm a little stunned," said Maria. "I can't move my brain quickly and the heart is only beginning to ache."

"Do not let us talk war. To-night we are still at peace . . . in the Country that is called The South . . . in Virginia that to-night is under only the dark-blue flag with the *Sic Semper Tyrannis*."

Silence again. For all the coolness and restraint of his temperament, that those who did not like him called lack of generous heat, he saw through tears the flames of the fire blur and run together. With a groan he put his head down upon their clasped hands.

"Oh, my dear, my dearest!" breathed Maria and laid her own cheek against the graying head.

. XXV .

WINGS had not been put to Cherokee House in the days when Drury and Rachael foresaw that they must be built. Now they were not needed. It stood, the original house, large enough and to spare.

In May the orchard blossomed. Behind it climbed the half and more of Drury's hundred acres left in ancient timber. Fencing and firewood and other needs came from that depth, but the tithe of the ax could be yielded and yet the forest hold fast. In May the meadow lay green and Cherokee Creek had a full song. The fields were ploughed, the garden planted. In the small flower garden that he kept as it had been, all that bloomed in May was blooming. Peacock and peahen drew their plumage over the grass. From the barnyard drifted homely, pleasant sounds. In the brick kitchen, built between two old tall pines, Ailsa's voice rose in song,

"Oh, sinner, you gwine git there!
Oh, don't you be afraid —"

The sugar maple seventy feet from the house door had a bench built around it. It was an old, old, huge tree. Here Drury sat writing, at his feet Rover the collie, now an old, old dog.

Fitzhugh, having crossed the creek by the foot-bridge at the bottom of the Old Street garden and let himself in at the big gate, took the winding, leafy bit of road up to Cherokee House. Drury put down pencil and paper and rose to meet him. "Why, Fitzhugh! when did you come?"

"Last night. I did not give notice because I was not sure till the last moment that I could get leave. As it is, I'm here for three days only. But 'God knows when again!' I thought."

The two brothers sat beneath the tree. "Volunteers are pouring in," said the one from Richmond. "Everybody with the least training is training others. With or without arms and uniform and equipment. Everything will come on as fast as is possible. We ought to have fifty thousand troops before midsummer. There's a rumor that the other side will move presently on Alexandria."

"Ah!" said Drury. "Well, it has been before and will be again. Yet a time shall come when mankind can say, 'We see now that it lessens'."

"Maybe. I had your and Father's ideas," said Fitzhugh. "They lasted until Almighty Provocation downed them. Now I'm with the most of us and I consider that I've chosen rightly."

"Every man and every woman must walk by their own light. I've no criticism of your choice, Fitzhugh."

The two kept silence, then said the younger, the lawyer, "I've talked with Father. He doesn't see all that's upon him. He thinks he can bow to the inevitable and be quiet now as to argument and print the news and ancient philosophy and bide his time in the *Herald*."

. . . And all the time men know just where he has been and inwardly still is. . . . His *Herald* is going down in the blast, his prestige and his living."

"It's very possible."

"And what are you going to do, Drury?"

"I am going to help him with the *Herald* so long as it exists. And for myself, farm these acres. And write as it comes to me, though I shall hardly be able to publish. . . . Live without and live within and interchange the two."

"You are not going to fight?"

"No."

"Why not? Because you are still for that so-called union that they themselves broke into bits?"

"No. Not just that. . . . Father and I are two men, though we work together and I love him and honor him deeply. But with me it's something else than just his position. . . . You'll have to take it, Brother, that I'm a kind of a Quaker."

Fitzhugh moved with a vast impatience. "Of course nobody could make me believe that you were afraid. I know better. What I see is lack of fire — and indolence — lack of imagination. . . . You'll meet all kinds of slur and criticism, maybe worse! It'll react on us all."

"Ah, let us see if we can't stand it."

But the other's anger mounted. "This family won't stand as high when you and Father have run your course. Virginia won't forget — you needn't think it!"

"Ah, Virginia. . . . We all love her, love her dearly. . . . The light plays differently for us, Fitzhugh. But God forbid my saying that it does not play

for you. It plays for you where you are and for me where I am. There is no quarrel between you and me, nor between Eskridge and me, nor Hugh Ball and me, nor between me and the men who are going from Elderfield and the county and elsewhere."

"And those who are forming and drilling at this moment north of Mason and Dixon?"

"No. No quarrel there, either."

"I do not pretend to understand you," said Fitzhugh and rose from the bench.

The other, rising too, put his arm around his ten-year junior. "We are brothers. No denying will affect that truth. So let us get the good of it. — How are Evelyn and the children?"

"They are well. The boy is growing hand over hand."

"Good! If you should want to send them out of harm's way here to the mountains, I'd have all the room in the world for them and a warm welcome."

"Thank you. — It might come to be, sometime. — Has any one heard from Jim?"

"Not recently."

"If I know him, he'll come home and pitch in."

Old Rover following them, they moved toward the house. The door stood open, but it was very still, still and sunny. No one came forth to meet them, no children's voices.

They entered. "Stay and have dinner with me. It's after twelve."

"I don't care if I do. — You don't alter anything here."

"Oh, it alters! It alters for the better. You'd hardly believe how endlessly meaning and beauty can grow."

Fitzhugh looked around the simple room. "Windows enough and books enough. You read and read and read?"

"Oh, yes! They're hives of honey. The bees that made them still have them, and I have them too."

Out of the window they saw Old Cherokee. "The old mountain. Do you remember the day when I fell into Tumbling Run — from the rock into the deep pool and you jumped in after me?"

"Yes."

"Crowds of memories," said Fitzhugh. "Crowds and crowds and crowds."

He walked about, looking at the backs of books. "I suppose there are always men of action and of inaction. I'm not going to quarrel with you, Drury. But I hope all your kind will be properly grateful when all our kind shall have defended Virginia."

"I'm grateful to you now, Fitzhugh. Just for being and going on — as I do, as I do."

He pulled the bell cord. Albany appeared. "Albany, set a place for Mr. Fitzhugh and tell Ailsa to put his name in the pot."

"How d'ye do, Albany?"

"Howdy, Mr. Fitzhugh!"

They walked through the house to the porch at the back and down the steps and across a sward chequered with light and shade from old tall pine trees whose fragrance, strong and life-giving, filtered

through the space. The path led by the kitchen where Ailsa still was singing,

“Oh, how do you know dey are angels?

Hallelujah!

I know dem by their shining,

I know dem by their shining,

Hallelujah!”

Now they were in the garden, where the strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and currants, and the lesser vegetable beds were edged with candytuft, pinks and sweet William. Around an apple tree was built a bench. The brothers sat down. “Ah!” said Fitzhugh, “sometimes I think there’s nothing like the country! But Evelyn is used to the city — and Richmond suits me too. This war is not going to last long — that’s impossible. When it’s over, we might build out of town and have a garden like this.”

“With all my heart and soul I hope it doesn’t last.”

“I suppose we all wish that. Fife and drum and bugle thrill, but they needn’t sound forever. — Is that Tom working over there?”

“Yes.”

“Molly told us that you had provided Ferris and Sally with sea passage and something besides to Liberia.”

“Yes, I did. They were already free. They wished to go. They are strong and fairly young, and Ferris has a good head. He can write; I shall hear from him.”

“That leaves you just the four. Tom, Albany, Ailsa and Mammy Doris.”

“Yes. I have freed them all.”

“The dickens you have! . . . Well, that’s like you

too. . . . And they all live in the quarters and you pay them good money?"

"It's home to them, as it is to me. We work very well together and are fond of one another."

"Do you *equal* yourself to them, Drury?"

"I think that in some things — not by any means in all things — I am further on. I can show them certain things — in justice ask certain things of them. That is all. . . . As I have some Friend further on, and yet where that is I shall in time stand myself. . . . So with them. I can't sing and cook like Ailsa, nor get wonders out of this garden like Tom. Albany is a better horseman than I am. Mammy nursed my children. . . . They've got religion and music, strength and love."

The bell rang from the porch. "There's my early dinner. Come along!"

Going, said Fitzhugh, "Is Father following your example?"

"Perhaps I am following his. He began, years ago, to free here and there. Some stayed with him, some are gone. You know as well as I that Mat and Barbary and Lucy are free."

"I had forgot. But others aren't."

"Not yet. I don't think it will be long before they are."

"High Hill isn't freeing theirs."

"No."

"Eskridge and Molly don't see eye to eye with you and Old Street. I talked with Eskridge in Richmond. He sees the South a great country developing after its own pattern. An easy, golden pattern, yet with all

the novelties and enterprises wrought into it. The old kept and the new adopted.

"Yes, old Eskridge!"

They went in to dinner. Simple enough it was, but Ailsa was as good a cook as might be. Albany waited. Just the two brothers — Drury at the foot, Fitzhugh at the side. They ate and drank, more in silence than with talk, and what talk there was, of Elderfield. The meal ended, they went out again to the sugar tree. "I must be going in a few minutes. There's a drill of the Elderfield Rifles this afternoon and I've promised to be there. So Preston McGregor is First Lieutenant?"

"Yes. He'll do tremendously well."

"You can say that, Drury — and yet you who ought to be Captain —"

"Ah, Fitzhugh, I have my nature and my place. Say that I recognize it and would not desert. Maybe a Great Captain has his use for me, however idle I seem and am. . . . And that's enough of all that! — You must go Wednesday?"

"Yes. I've got to get my company fully accoutered. It's difficult without the works that they have North. You wouldn't know Richmond. It's growing an armed camp."

The field, where for years had drilled the militia of this side of Albany County, spread by Cherokee Creek less than a mile from the low hilltop and the sugar tree. The two watched the field filling. Men, women and children, a good part of the population of Elderfield would be there. Now the wind brought the sound of the Elderfield band marching

from High Street to the field. "They are playing the 'Marseillaise'."

"We're getting our own marching tunes. So far 'Dixie' 's the one that suits everybody."

Fitzhugh stood up. "Well, old Drury, I must be going! No, I don't mean to quarrel with you, whatever you do or don't do. Life's too short."

"Life's too long. We're a family that love and trust one another. We're going on with that. — Wait till I speak to Albany and I'll walk to the field with you."

"Will you stay and watch us?"

"I may for a while. . . . It's brought to me that in the years to come — for it's going to be years, not months or weeks to come — I'll be watching with a pained heart many an operation of Mars."

They heard the band more loudly as it left High Street and turned toward the field by the creek. The old collie roused himself to accompany them; they descended the hill in the May weather.

IT WAS December, 1862. Burnside, with above ninety thousand blue-clad men, held the territory north of the Rappahannock River and the town of Fredericksburg, his objective the crossing of that river and then on to Richmond. Lee, with Jackson and Longstreet and seventy thousand men in gray, lay south and west of the town, the gray numbers and dispositions somewhat masked by a range of wooded hills closing as with a drop-scene the plain immediately before the town. Battle impended.

For some time, this day, that and the other, there had occurred fringe encounters. Burnside was projecting bridge-building, placing pontoons and crossing. Commands on the other side had it in command to hinder that as much as might be. Bodies of gray sharpshooters prevented and scattered blue engineers and workers. High-placed Northern batteries sent shells across into wood and marsh whence came those smoke puffs. Each side had its casualties.

South of the river a captain of Longstreet's — Captain Ralph Morrison — was badly hurt by a piece of shell. A farm-house neighbored the bit of wood where he fell. His men carried him here — the folk were kind and gave their spare room — the surgeon did his

best but shook his head. In his pocketbook were found the usual directions. "In case of my death or severe wounding — "

The surgeon said, "Better telegraph — "

The telegram went to Elderfield, to James Randall, whose daughter Artemisia had been married, the past summer, to Ralph Morrison. It went to the office behind the wintry trees. James opened it, sat studying it, then rising, passed through the door into Drury's room. Drury read.

"What's to be done?" asked James. "Some one should go — if any can get through. There's reason to expect a big battle any day now. This house may be in the lines."

"If I know Artemisia — "

"Yes. She'll start for him, whether or not he's ever reached. I'll go with her."

"It's too much for you with that cough. Let me."

"Well, if you will, Drury."

The snow was falling when Artemisia clung to them all in turn in the Old Street house, but last to her mother, then let fall her veil and was helped by her father into the stage that stopped for her and Drury. Still the snow fell when three hours later they left the stage for the railway. They must wait for the train. All trains were late. The inn was poor enough but the landlady brought them chickory-coffee and they had a small, red-hot stove to drink it by.

"Take off your bonnet," said Drury, "and lie there on the sofa. I'll put my greatcoat over you. We've an hour and a half to wait. Sleep a little; you'll need all your rest and strength, if you're to nurse him. Yes,

I'll call you. There now — you always were a brave child!"

He himself sat by the window. There was little stir, within, without. The snow fell steadily though not thickly. Here they were still much above sea level; further east it was probably winter rain. . . . Step by step, with poor connections, and as soon as they left the mountains, involved with movements of troops. . . . Artemisia, who had not slept at all the night before, now slept, but uneasily. He looked at her guardedly, so as not to waken her with his gaze. He thought again how like she was to their mother, like and not like. He opened the window a little, to relieve the dry heat of the stove, and sat beside it in the gray light. There was no movement other than the falling snow in the poor street that was turned away from the small station where several beside themselves awaited the train, moving up and down the platform, or sitting talking in the close waiting room. He would have left this room and joined them to gather what news he might, but when he moved Artemisia stirred and moaned. He retook the chair by the window, drew from his pocket a tiny volume of Shelley and sat and read.

In an hour he waked Artemisia. "Oh, I was dreaming of Ralph! We were in some place like heaven together! — Oh, Drury, what if he has gone forever and I am here forever!"

"That is not possible. We are endlessly together. Now, my dear —"

The snow had ceased to fall. The two crossed the street to the station, a Negro carrying their bags. A

very few were gathered there; besides themselves, three passengers only awaited the shriek of the whistle and the slowing to a stop of the engine and three or four coaches. Railways were yet primitive everywhere, and doubly so in the war-ridden and agricultural South, where much that was worn out could not be replaced, nor that which was broken mended. Moreover, a government-at-war had first claim everywhere. Travel as travel, private travel for private ends, was falling to a minimum. The station master appeared beside the waiting knot. "Sorry for ye, gentlemen and lady, but we've just heard — train's got aboard four companies that's got to get on as quick as may be. Not a mite of room and not a minute to squander. It ain't making any stop. There she is now! But it ain't no use — "

The whistle shrieked, the train passed with a glimmer of soldiers at every opening. . . . There rose no complaint from the station platform. "Soldiers. Right of way," said one of the would-be passengers and another, "Better luck to-morrow! It ain't pressing, anyhow, my quitting town to-day. They won't ride me on a rail if I don't git out." And the third, "Maybe you can't away to-morrow, either, Tom. Battle in the air. Don't you sniff it?"

But Artemisia stood like a snow woman, frozen, looking to the east. Drury took her hands. "Courage! Let us think a bit. . . . There won't be another train till late in the night, and it may go by just the same. The snow is not deep on the roads. I'd say it was clearing. Shall I try to get a team and we go on anyhow?"

"Oh, yes, yes!"

It was not so difficult as it would be, and was fast

growing to be, the procuring of horses, that were all so needed by the armies. In an hour they had at their disposal a team and an ancient closed carriage with a Negro to drive. The horses, too, were old, but they seemed strong and at any rate were all that might be had. They took the road. It was already December afternoon.

"Yaas, sah! Shucks and Jerry and I knows the road. We sho' oughter get to Oakside, that's Mr. Cunningham's place, by nine o'clock . . . or er little later. Mr. Cunningham's in the war, but the ladies will sho' tek care of you. — I got the ol' robe and some straw fo' yo' feet."

Six hours' driving. Low mountains, lowering now everywhere, up and down hill, valley stretches, covered bridges over larger streams, smaller streams splashed through. Ice forming, but the streamlets not yet stiffened. At first snow upon the road but not drifted, then bare road but not worked for many a month, painfully rutted. Then good bits, then bad again. Slowly on, very slowly on. The sky had cleared, there was a moon. "Try to sleep," said Drury. "There, rest your head. I'll hold you so."

Artemisia tried, but presently sat up again. "No. I cannot. I'll sleep if Ralph's spared. Or if he's not spared."

"You met two years ago last summer. Tell me about it. He came to the Springs with the Allinghams. It was at a ball, wasn't it?"

"Yes. I didn't like him at first. There was a man that I thought I liked better — idiot that I was! But it wasn't long . . ."

"Tell me."

It was a relief maybe as great as tears. The ball, a ride through the woods, a picnic on a mountain top. "The others played foolish games, but he and I clambered down the side to a cabin and sat on the porch with the mountain people. They gave us cool water in a gourd and a cake each of maple sugar. There was an old woman with a pipe who said she could tell our fortunes. But he said — Ralph said — that we were our own best fortune tellers, and so we told them good-by and climbed back to the others. — You've always liked him, haven't you, Drury?"

"Yes. From the first time he came to Old Street, and you brought him across the creek and up the hill to Cherokee House, and we all fell to gathering apples."

"Oh, I remember! . . . After that picnic there was another ball. He and I danced together . . . I hardly remember with whom else I danced. . . . And then we said, 'Let us go out into the night,' and he got my shawl and we went out on the great verandah and found a place where it was solitary, only the music behind us. . . . The moon shone like this, only it was a golden, summer moon. . . . Oh, how icy this one is, Drury! how dead and icy —"

Artemisia broke down. Her brother comforted her. She wiped her tears away and began again to narrate. The moon shone, the wheels turned on the winter road, the minutes passed. A light became visible before them. The driver turned and spoke. "Oaksides. They ain't gone to bed yet."

How hospitable was Oaksides, when it learned their

need! "Trying to get through to her wounded husband? — Yes, indeed, come right in! Let me get my mother. — Mother, here are Mr. Randall from Elderfield and his sister, Mrs. Morrison —"

Warmth, shelter, food, kindness; the horses to the stable, the driver to the quarters; a firelit room for Artemisia, Drury quartered with the sixteen-year-old son of the house. Kindness and kindness and kindness. Cessation from motion, warmth, rest, sleep. All night; and at eight in the morning a determined, silvery breakfast bell.

Human goodness and kindness.

As soon as might be, they were again in the ramshackle carriage that yet held together, with the two horses that did the best they could, and the driver, Hiram, with whom they seemed by now long acquainted. "Good-by!" cried Oakside. "May you find him better. Good-by, good-by!"

They drove all that day, stopping only by a spring to eat the dinner Oakside had put up for them, and later at a comfortless crossroads tavern, where the horses were fed and rested. After this they made yet two hours to a small town and a decent inn. Here they unexpectedly met a traveler, an elderly planter of their acquaintance. "Fredericksburg? Captain Morrison wounded there! — My sincere hopes, Mrs. Morrison, that you'll find him on the road to recovery. — Train? No, it's idle just now to put any hope in the railroad. You'll get there sooner this way. Every sign of a big battle. Well, offences must come, saith the Scriptures, but woe to them by whom they come! Altogether a hard saying, like most sayings, if they

are high enough up. Your horses seem pretty jaded — old too — but I doubt if you could get for love or money any better. Yes, it looks as though it might come on to snow, but maybe not.”

They had supper with this gentleman. Artemisia by now had drawn together her native courage and the hope of youth. “He’s so strong! I think he must get well, even though it’s grave. Don’t you, Drury?”

“A great many do. There’s an honest hope and let us travel with it!”

She did so and could make her supper in their company and afterwards could sit down at an old piano in the inn parlor and let her fingers bring music from the keys. Of all her mother’s children, she only inherited this talent; not so strong in her as in Maria, but yet enough for pleasure to herself and others. She played a few minutes, then left it abruptly. “I’ll go to bed — ”

The seventy-year old planter and Drury sat for a while and talked, the older man smoking, the younger relaxed, his hands behind his head. “I haven’t seen your father for a long time. Time gets long very quickly nowadays. Pardon me, but he’s having difficulties with his paper, isn’t he?”

“Yes. It was to be expected. He cannot say what he would, so he says little. He cannot give the news that the people want, as they want it. He cannot *do* overwrought triumph, fathoms deep disparagement of the Opposed, high-flown hopes sailing away in the clouds. Then every one knows what his paper was and the present great majority now resent it. One way of resenting is not to mention it, not to read it, not to

subscribe for it or advertise in it, to let it perish of inanition in a corner. Another is *to show it up*, finding out disloyalties in capital letters and lower-case letters. He may have to discontinue — to end — the paper. I do not know. It has of course been in great part his livelihood."

"Unless we win this war," said the old planter, "we're in for general impoverishment. This winter I've begun to wonder if we aren't in for it, even if we win it. . . . But one mustn't think that way. That way — as Shakespeare says — madness lies."

"Does it?"

"You have two brothers in the army?"

"Yes. Fitzhugh from the first, and Jim as soon as he could get back to Virginia."

"And now your sister's husband is wounded. — Eskridge Kerr is important at Richmond, with his hand on all kinds of transportation and mechanical needs."

"Yes."

"On your mother's side there are at least two brigadiers and a Cabinet man. Your father — and you, so far as you are associated with him — are not without friends at court."

"It is possible to look at it that way."

"You are on your way to a battle ground. Is this the first time?"

"In this war? — No. Matters took me to Richmond last spring. I was there during the Seven Days. All manner of help was needed for the wounded brought in. I nursed in one of the hospitals."

"What I feel regarding your father is that he, like

myself, is no longer a young man. Everybody knows his honest stand for all these many years. He's not going to change at this time of day any more than a tree changes its kind. It isn't in him to do it. Night, winter, silence, anything. People used to say, 'his able stand.' Now they'll take back the 'able.' That's in the everlasting wheeling of men's minds. Undoubtedly some will be denying the 'honest.' But aging, as he is, and his long reputation and his kin and connections, will make life possible. We old, lopped trees don't fare so badly in the swing of opinion. First and last we live in weather and must meet its extremes. We can always say, 'Not for long now — not for long . . .' So sit in the sun on the cabin step and let who will say, 'The old, helpless fool!' "

Drury smiled. "I don't see you so old and helpless, sir, and certainly I don't see my father so. If not one thing then another. He will live and inwardly-outwardly shoot out new boughs."

"And you?" said the perspicacious companion.

"Oh, I shall live and I hope shoot out new boughs."

"I've read the poets — some of them," pursued the old, ingenuous planter. "Not long ago, looking over an old magazine, I came upon your name. 'The poet, Drury Randall —' Apparently they look at things in their own way."

"A man looks at things in his own way."

"You're involved in the paper with your father — though I know he's always kept politics under his own hand."

"Yes, a part of me is involved."

The other studied him; then, "What do you want?"

You haven't gone into the war like your brothers. You aren't — though there are likenesses — just a copy of your father, either. Or of your mother."

"No."

"Well, then — "

"What I want," said Drury, "is to find essential being."

He unlocked his hands from behind his head and rose from the chair. "It's a pleasure to meet you again, sir. We are stirring early, so — "

"I'll go to bed too, though I haven't your long journey." They shook hands. "Remember me to your father and mother. I thoroughly respect your father, and your mother's a divine woman. . . . I don't know that you ever knew it, but thirty-nine years ago I wished to marry her. . . . I heartily hope you'll find Captain Morrison living and going to live."

On they went in the morning, and now they began to find war-trampled ground. There lay a desolation upon the country, an unkemptness, a loss, a life lowered, a collective heart missing beats. It came on to snow, and the bare winter brown began to be as white as bone beneath a roof of lead.

They made through this day, but by twilight snow was falling, wind blowing with an icy fury. The Blue Ridge was now behind them, they were in rolling country that would more and more smooth itself as they went eastward. Four days now from home, four endless days. Oh, God! thought Artemisia. At dusk they reached the door of a roadside tavern, an old, well-known place, still with a swinging sign, the Bell and Clapper. Others beside themselves had hasted to

reach it, sheltering from tempest. Drury got with difficulty a tiny room for Artemisia, and a third of something like a loft for himself. He took his sister food and drink and made her take it. The earlier hopefulness was vanishing from her. "We shall never get there — he has been in heaven a long time."

"If so, so, my dear. Let me tell you, you have each other still. You are there and here, both of you."

"Oh, Drury, why cannot the world be happy?"

The window panes shook to the blast. From the big general room of the inn rose noise enough, raised voices, heavy steps. "There are more travelers than the Bell and Clapper has seen for some time. A couple of families are refugeeing from Fredericksburg, and there are half a dozen soldiers — foragers — lost for the night from their command. — Well, you have eaten something. Now are you going to sleep?"

"I'll try."

"That's a good child."

Downstairs there seemed to him a weary hurly-burly. There was not too much food; a smoky fire. Men, tired and bewildered, yet talked and talked, not contentedly in a homely ring, but with a strain and sharpness, standing, pacing, speaking, despite momentary company, each somehow to himself, while the storm raved against the house. The refugeeing women and children and several aged men were given the space about the hearth. Evidently they tarried only to strive to become warm; presently they would seek the beds the house could provide. Of this cluster were three boys under sixteen — one as young as twelve — who, fascinated by the cavalrymen, kept as near them as

they might. A child from the hearth, running across the floor to one of the three — the room was wide and long — tripped and fell. Drury picked her up. "Don't cry, kitten! Where's the hurt?" and brought her to her mother, who had started from her chair.

"Oh, thank you! — There, Caroline, you aren't hurt! You're just dead tired and keyed up like the rest of us. — I'm afraid we're keeping you from the fire, sir."

"Not at all." He hesitated, "You are from Fredericksburg?"

"Yes. By now the Yankees will have entered the town. At any moment there'll be a great battle." She looked at him with appalled dark eyes in an appalled white face. "We are going to kinspeople, twenty miles on."

"You do not by any chance," he said, "know anything of Captain Ralph Morrison, who lies wounded in a farmhouse south of the river?"

But no, she did not. Her husband was with the Army of Tennessee, her brother in the farther South. She had with her three children, her own mother and a servant woman, and the youngest of the three boys, her nephew. Before no great time she and the black woman shepherded the others forth from the main room to their own limited quarters. The two older boys belonged with an old man and woman, their grandparents. These two old people now hugged the fire. "It's a night — a night —"

"From Fredericksburg?" asked Drury.

They were from the other side of Fredericksburg, where the Northern Army had been lying this long

time. They had had to leave their house and had gone to friends in the town. Then the town was no longer safe and the friends would go down the river. But they themselves had a son with a farm ten miles from this tavern. He was with General Jackson, but their daughter-in-law was a good woman. "It's been a terrible trip this weather —"

Drury asked his question again. "You don't by any remote chance know anything of a Captain Ralph Morrison?" — but they did not.

He had already asked it of the foraging soldiers. But they were of a small fringing reconnoitering command and knew nothing of preliminary casualties before Fredericksburg. They only knew that there was due a big fight, and they chafed because of the wild night and their separation from their Company and the condition of their horses. They were dead beat and must be up by dawn.

The remaining travelers belonged mainly to the county in which was set the Bell and Clapper. Group by group the room grew less crowded, fairly empty, empty.

Drury went to Artemisia's room. "No, I haven't slept yet. I think I will — I'm trying to make myself. If only that wind would stop! It says and says and says, 'Loneliness!'"

He sat down beside her. "Give me your hand. Now, go to sleep." He spoke as one with authority. She lay, her hand in his, her dark eyes that were like her mother's upon him; before long the lids closed, her breathing grew even. He sat there until he saw her relaxed and quietly sleeping, when he withdrew his

hand, waited yet a little, then rose and without sound left the room. Below, in the main room now empty, with the fire yet burning behind the mighty fender, he spoke to the sleepy tavern clerk. "I wish to be as near my sister as I may be. I am going to sleep here, rather than in that distant place they put me. That settle will do all right. We'll bring it nearer the fire and since I see there's wood enough, I'll keep it up through the night."

Alone, his greatcoat about him, he sat still before the fire, in a corner of the settle. They burned well enough now, the great hickory logs; the wind in the wide chimney was lessening. There was a clock upon the wall; tick, tock — tick, tock.

Drury sat motionless, his head thrown back against the settle's worn wood. The playing light turned his hair into a fine, living bronze and sent in waves a glow across his marked features. He had bodily fatigue; eyes and mouth showed it. Slowly in the firelight and the quiet which the ticking clock only aided, the lines became less deep, the tension vanished. He passed into deep thought and deep feeling.

In the night time the wind dropped, the snow ceased. When the sun was up and breakfast over, the countrymen, the refugees, the soldiers, the two for Fredericksburg, might all take the road again. Snow lay upon the earth, but not too thickly for travel. All resumed their several directions from the Bell and Clapper, and all presently began to meet rumors of the great battle. These grew and became definite. "Yesterday — all day yesterday. No, it wasn't snowing there. A fearful, big battle, as bad almost as any we've had. Who

won? Why, *we* won. Maybe they're going to fight again to-day. Get Burnside out of Fredericksburg and back across the river. . . . A lot of men killed, I heard. A lot of them a-lying there, over the plain in the snow."

THE March wind blew around the house in Old Street. The sky, night and day, was brilliant; night and day were cold. Ann wore a shawl, sitting with her cat, Amber, in her lap, in an old armchair by the fire that roared in the chimney. Captain Ralph Morrison, pale and thin, lacking a leg taken off at Fredericksburg, lay upon the sofa under a silk patchwork quilt. Maria Randall and Emmeline Mason were at High Hill upon a week's visit to Molly, who ailed. Artemisia had gone to High Street and Macduffie's and Penfield's, shopping, with Mammy's grandson to carry her basket. In her purse was Confederate money in bills of high denomination: on the shelves now of Elderfield's shops lay goods scant in amount and failing in quality; it took more and more money to buy a very little.

The wind blew, Ann stroked Amber and stared into the fire. Captain Morrison read a Richmond newspaper four days old. Ann was dressed in black, as was Artemisia shopping in High Street and Maria and Molly at High Hill. That was for Jim, who had died in January, a prisoner at Johnson's Island. Black for women losing close kindred was in sentiment so obligatory that even in such times as these all effort was made to procure and pay for it. Molly and Evelyn in

Richmond had managed it for this family. Maria didn't care, and Ann didn't care, but they wore it. It was easier to do what was habitual. . . . Jim, who wished always to be as free as a hawk, Jim dying a prisoner of war, dying of disease in a terrible comfortless prison . . . Ann put down the tortoiseshell cat, and with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands, stared into the flames.

Her brother-in-law spoke from the sofa. "Winter quarters along the Rappahannock — a long letter about it. Somebody named X. He thinks the move won't be long now. Hooker this time — full strength." He dropped the paper and lay staring at the bending trees without the window.

Said Ann, "Do you think it will ever be over?"

"Some day."

"Do you still think we'll win? Yes, I know we've got devotion and the generals and, in some parts, a string of victories. Father thinks they are Pyrrhic victories."

"I know he does. . . . We didn't recognize at first that we're fighting against long odds. That's seen now. But — but — we've *got* to win. We'll force it somehow. You'll see."

He moved restlessly, throwing aside the quilt made of pieces of all the old silken dresses, ribbons, scarves. "Artemisia must be buying out the stores."

"That wouldn't be so hard to do nowadays. — Wait and I'll fix your cushions for you. It's time, too, for your wine and iron."

She waited on him. "How good you all are to me!"

"Well, I should think so. You're a son and brother!"

"And a helpless log upon you all."

"Don't be so vituperative! You're not a log — you've only had a big branch broken off. — Do you want to go on with 'Vanity Fair' or would you rather talk about Artemisia? Now that she's got you safe and over the mountains, she and Drury, and at home and getting well, she's blooming like a rose. There are other sorrows, but you, Ralph, are her joy."

"She is — Artemisia. I'm not like to forget that day at Fredericksburg when I looked out of despair and black night and saw her face."

"Well, she would have gone to you if she had to climb Caucasus."

The fire burned, the wind sounded in the chimney and about the house. Ann took Amber again on her lap. "It's a strange world. It's so peaceful here in this old room, despite the wind, and in the garden the daffodils and hyacinths are coming up, and yet we're all waiting for battle, and we women are wearing black, and men are living who won't be living long."

"There are the crippled and cut off," said Morrison. "My people put all their money in and unless we win have lost it. I never had any extravagant headpiece. I would have made a good farmer. I love the earth, but what if one cannot stand upon it without crutches?"

"Aren't we in a weaving way?" asked Ann. "And Amber is lying here purring. — Let's have the backgammon board."

Artemisia found them playing. "I could only get so much of this and nothing of that! I wish 'blockade' was out of the spelling book! Oh, it is cold and windy. — Move, Amber, and let me get to the fire."

As she passed she bent and kissed her husband. "Are you glad that I am back? Are you glad that I am home?" She had the radiance of a rose — Artemisia. Ralph feasted his eyes upon her. "Yes, I'm glad! — That doesn't mean that Ann hasn't been a jewel."

"Oh, Ann's that. Ann's a stand-by."

"Did you go by the office?"

"Yes. The *Herald's* just out. I brought two of it."

Morrison took one, Ann the other. The statements were all there, the statements from the theater of war and the Confederate Capital, all that could be gathered for a weekly paper. But they were there without controversy, passionate exposition or prophecy. News — news only, carefully and conscientiously presented, with a bridle upon wild rumor. One might think that such an objective and historical treatment might have a value, where the emotions of hope and fear were so swollen, but in mass the town, the county, the State, in what degree it was penetrated by the old *Albany County Herald*, wished another manner of presentation. There would again be an impatience, a distaste, an anathema. — James Randall's editorial also stood too wide of fever.

Yet there was the news, given without comment as it was received. Ann read it aloud. Battles at hand, now that it was spring. One at least would be near Fredericksburg; that was all that was certain. Movements in the farther South. Charleston and monitors. Tennessee. The reader and the listeners felt a powerful and a painful interest, an invisible hand immediately about their hearts. James and Drury Randall likewise had felt it.

They finished with Mars' facts and surmises, and because it had to be in self-preservation in such a day, they let them drift aside. They were there to swing back with the emotional tide, never fear! Morrison lay on his side, looking into the fire; the two sisters were as idle. The clock measured five minutes. "Read Father's editorial," said Artemisia.

Ann read. "It is not politics for to-day," she said, when she had finished. "But we might come to it."

"Of course, I can't see as he sees," said Ralph. "How is it possible, all that? We've got to be reasonable. How can I help feeling that it is a kind of betraying? — Yet I have reverence for your father, knowing how he lives."

"What has Drury got this week?"

Ann turned to the page. Two poems chosen from poetry's past he printed every week, the whole, week by week, year by year, making his own anthology; and one poem culled from contemporary work. Sometimes this was his own. There was a column of far-gathered items that he thought marked cultural advance. To many they were merely curious, others they interested, and a few saw in them what he saw. Correspondence followed; four letters severally upon the *Habits of Birds*, *Indian Relics in Albany County*, the "Eureka" of Edgar Allan Poe, and an English book — "The Origin of Species" — that was half shocking, half fascinating, the correspondent dealing with it. Then came Drury's weekly essay, never long, and this time drawn forth by the letter, signed "Dreamer", upon the "Eureka." The contemporary poem in this issue was likewise his.

Because reading aloud was the best entertainment after all for a March day by the fire, Ann, who read well, read on. She read the poems, the first that she herself had loved, the second that she had never heard but now thought most beautiful, Drury's three stanzas. Artemisia, who also loved poetry, listened, her round chin in her fine hand. Morrison gave a half attention. He was not learned in poetry and a vision came to him of always having now to be cared for by women like this. Ann went on to the items of invention, discovery and stretch of thought and then to a happily condensed and arranged world-story, this time Odysseus among the Phæacians. The wind raved, the fire burned. Artemisia had moved a low chair to the sofa where she sat, her dark head resting upon the pillow beside Ralph's, her hand in his. Odysseus bade the goodly people farewell and sailed in the well-oared ship for his next adventure.

"Shall I stop?"

"Oh, no! Finish Drury's page."

She read the "Letters to the Editor." "Yes, I've seen that about the cardinal myself. — That man had shelves and shelves, a real museum, of Indian things. — 'The Origin of Species.' Have you read it, Ralph?"

"No."

"This man says it is world-shaking. I wonder. . . . All the churches consider it blasphemy."

"It's all ink and paper," said Ralph. "It's the guns that shake the world."

She read the letter upon "Eureka" and then Drury's commentary. "Do you know what he means?"

"No. Do you?"

"At times when I sit very still and see deeply, as though through clear water. . . . I know that Drury has a life that most of us have not as yet. He sees more and sees it differently."

"I don't understand him but I feel him," said Artemisia. "I feel him in my heart and my heart in his."

"No!" said Morrison sharply. "That's the way you feel me."

"Oh, yes, my darling! I don't mean that it is the same, not just the same. How could it be? But I love Drury and I know that he loves us — and that he sees me in the 'us.' He loves Ann too, and Mother and the rest."

"I understand you, Artemisia," said Ann. He's — Drury."

"God forbid that I should forget all that he has done for me!" said Morrison. "And I feel him too, when I see him. But when he's not here, I keep on thinking of how he does not answer when his country calls him. But of course he's always been under your father's influence."

"It isn't at all that, though of course that would have something to do with it. But he's himself. If he's wrong, he'll find it out — just as I'll find it out about myself — or you, or any, about yourself. All of us about ourselves, and so the world about itself."

Ann lifted her tall slight figure from the big chair. "I'll keep this copy, Artemisia, for my file. When we're old — when we die — some of the children will like my file."

"You ought to see her room and her shelves and drawers, Ralph! She has collected and collected and collected. The children adore it. It's like a robber's cave, only it's tidy."

Ann, with Amber following, went upstairs to her own room. She opened a deep drawer and laid this week's *Albany County Herald* with its fellows. Above the drawer rose three or four shelves of dark polished wood. Upon one rested together the four slender volumes of Drury's published verse. He had written her name in each, with "from Drury." On the one hand of these stood a luster mug that was Gilbert's and a quaint Staffordshire figure that had been Little Ann's treasure; on the other a sandalwood box that was Rachael's. Now it held small lovely shells that the children and Rachael herself had gathered from the beach of Outermost. . . . Another shelf bore rare and splendid shells of Captain David Gilbert's gathering in tropic isles.

Her room — shelf and mantel and chest — held mementos enough, but this one corner was her dearest. She had a chintz-covered couch that neighbored it and there were three windows with straight blue curtains, and all the March height and light and movement without. Her fire, too, burned, hickory and oak, though a smaller one than in the parlor below. She stood looking out of the window, then laid herself down upon the couch; and her life too, and lives of others played like light upon water.

March, April, early May. Chancellorsville, Salem Church, The Wilderness, Spottsylvania. Stonewall Jackson killed . . . Summer . . . Gettysburg.

• XXVIII •

ON THE eve of Gettysburg died Mr. Upjohn, the old pastor. He was very old, old almost as Captain David Gilbert, older than had been Miss Patsy. He lay in bed a short while, venerable, uncomplaining, starting, he said, upon a great adventure.

Drury went to see him. "How are you, my dear?" asked Mr. Upjohn, and laid his old hand upon the younger man's.

"I am well. I am sorry to see you here."

"Shouldn't we rather rejoice?"

"Yes. You have run your course. Well then, I rejoice with you."

"Going, I may lose consciousness for a moment," said the old man. "As one might in a swoon. But the time will be nothing to me as I awake. Or perhaps I may not lose consciousness at all. I shall like to make the passage consciously, but either way is all right."

"Yes."

"All the words and the phrases and the definitions are all right. Provisionally all right. They are well meant. Figures and costumes, words for the wordless. The event and the experience are the Word. The lower room of the Word and the middle room and the upper room. You and I begin to understand."

"Yes. The little beginning."

"You are one of those with whom I am already together. That will grow."

"I believe it."

"I bless all things. — Say it, too, Drury."

"I bless all things."

"It is enough," said the old man. "Give me the milk there, will you? Now tell me what is doing in the town."

Three days later he died easily, conscious at the end and perhaps through the transitional moment. The men and women who were in their prime or a little elderly when Drury was a boy were dropping away.

This summer was very quiet in Elderfield and round about. All but the fewest of the young men were gone. Boys grown old enough since the war began were going. A certain number of men badly hurt were back at home but they seemed too tired to make a noise. The graveyard held graves of the killed in battle or the perished by disease in camp. Of the elder men and prominent citizens, several were in Richmond, others elsewhere on varied business. It seemed to an extent a town, a county, of women and children and hurt and aged men. There were, of course, the colored people, — the men in the fields, the house servants. But there was no money to spend or else money that would not buy. Fields went down, stock dwindled, matters wore out, replacement and repair left the country. The expression of life and affairs grew continually more haggard.

Then came the news of Gettysburg.

Baliol Robertson sat in James Randall's office, James at his desk, Drury by the window, looking out

upon the summer street and the Doric pillars of the courthouse. "Three days' battle . . . Defeat . . . Lee recrossing the Potomac . . . Mark my words, Randall, it's the beginning of the flood tide against us."

"Likely enough. I don't know that it's the beginning."

"More than two years at war, and maybe another two to follow, before a desperate people give up. . . . And at first we sang of a short war and gaudy victory. Well, well, well —"

"Well —"

"When it's over, we'll know poverty and bonds. . . . Yes, your tolling bell — your sea of troubles."

He turned and turned the Napoleon-in-his-cocked-hat paper weight. "I feel my age."

"I feel mine. But there may be," said James, "everlasting renewal."

"It's far back to the time when you and I were boys in Elderfield. Do you remember the day when we caught the big fish?"

"I suppose we both hooked it. Certainly we both pulled it in."

"And the whole week we tried to learn arrow making from the Last of the Cherokees?"

"Yes, indeed; old Loud Thunder and his stories of the Golden Age. There are always stories of the Golden Age."

"I remember," said Drury at the window, "when I was a shaver, Grandfather telling me of Loud Thunder and his father, Great Elk. The Golden Age is inside and can always be waked."

"Well, perhaps you are right," said Baliol. "It would be fantastic and rather beautiful if we waked up one morning and found that the poets had always been talking of matters of fact."

"Do you remember, Baliol, the day we followed the gypsies?"

"Don't I? And the fortunes an old woman told."

"What did she tell you?" asked Drury.

"She told me that I would marry a queen and I did. And Baliol that he would be much respected and would help folk out of difficulties, which was as much as to say that he would become an able lawyer."

"Yes, those gypsies," said Baliol. "They still go through, but I do not now run away and follow them."

"I do it still in fancy. If one could fashion life to heart's desire, it would be a manner of free life."

"You were always a master, James, at hiding your fancies."

"Too much a master. — Drury, now, is freer."

"Well, then," said Drury, "I fancy you and I fancy Mr. Robertson."

Crumpet, now a lanky youth, appearing at the door, announced that Major Inglesant would like to speak to Mr. Randall. James rose, "Come in, Major!"

The Major entered, old now, hawk-eyed, hawk-nosed. "Have you any news of this battle that I haven't? It is inconceivable — it is only a temporary defeat!"

That summer, Gettysburg and the Surrender of Vicksburg. That early autumn the dark fields of Chickamauga. In and out, summer and autumn, lesser fields. . . . "Dixie" still sounded far and near, high

and defiant, but now that gathering cry, that battle entry, gay and fierce, began to take on the sense of a lament played that way.

So Maria thought, walking in the long garden behind the house in Old Street. She was more or less lame, but she could walk here with a blackthorn staff. It was September; the grapes were ripening. She walked slowly in the good sunshine, a beautiful woman for all her lameness and increasing years. The increasing years, and now, when all should be golden, peaceful afternoon, with no fear of the natural shadows, this — this! Chickamauga was the latest news, and she had a brother's son who was killed there, leading his regiment. . . . Chickamauga . . . those old, revengeful, Indian names.

"Where are we going?" thought Maria. "It is more important to know where we are going than whence we came."

There were seats under the long grape arbor. Seats had been placed for her convenience at not a few points in the garden. She sat down and looked at the sun upon the yellowing leaves and the purple clusters. "How bitter is going to be the winter!

'If winter comes can spring be far behind?'

How bitter is going to be the spring!"

She brooded, her musician's hands upon the blackthorn stick across her knees. Woe, woe! The tragic chords, private and general. Dark music — wailing, crowding discords . . . and they never could be confined to one land. They never had been, they never would be.

Maria shivered for all the September sunshine. With her staff to help, she got to her feet and began again her progression. Now there stood the pear trees, their small, shining leaves turning to bronze, their fruit all gathered. The path led on by quiet garden scenery to the wall with reddened creeper and the gate that opened to Cherokee Creek. For Maria it was one of her longer walks, but she would take it to-day. Her heart was burdened; God knew her heart was burdened. It was better to be out in the sunshine. On the other side of the gate a bench was set against the wall. Leaving the garden, she took her seat here. The bank sloped to the creek and the footbridge; then great trees and the gradual hill up to Cherokee House. The earliest to color among the trees were coloring; sumach growing this side the wall showed leaf and torch of fire.

Maria sat still, her body at rest, her eyes half-closed. Images began to play, a long train of images. Quiet and stately, *maestoso*. War and peace, war and peace; war in peace and peace in war. . . . The figure eight in movement within itself. Infinity.

Her home, her husband, her children. Her old home when she was a child. The beginning of things, the musician and the instrument. How long ago, and not in the least long ago. Maybe after a little one would do it all over again, only bettering execution and understanding and joy. . . . Joy that had been from the first, only it was so dashed with fear and anguish. The white keys and the black, the minor and the major.

Her dark eyes opened and she watched a butterfly upon a thistle, then the water slipping under the foot-

bridge. Cherokee — Cherokee. Another Indian name, this time liked. The great sycamore that stretched its pale arms, the climbing further shore, the house atop among the trees. . . . Maria fell to thought of Rachael, not so much thought as image, not so much image as deep and wide feeling. "I feel her so —"

Rachael had been a still person. Still waters run deep. . . . Death was perhaps the difference between water and air or ether. A depth of air, a depth of ether. What would it be to be sheer, pervasive consciousness? Or with form still, only so diffused . . . or not diffused, only incalculably swift and penetrative?

Rachael, a quiet music, not easily understood, but highly true. "I think she was — is — great music. Yes, I feel you, Rachael! You are in my mind, my heart and my senses. The precious children too."

The butterflies returned to the thistle, the water slid under the bridge, the bridge crossed to the great sycamore, the path led along through the bit of wood where the wild grapes were hanging and the nuts waiting for the frost when they would begin to drop. The path began to mount; the house that had been built for Drury and Rachael showed forth behind the branches where the leaves were coloring.

It seemed to Maria that James sat beside her and that they remembered and touched, wherever they were, their own children. They went by in a frieze; they sat in a ring. Drury, Molly, Ann, Jim, Fitzhugh, Artemisia. And with them, though a step away, Rachael, Eskridge, Evelyn, Ralph. And in and out the wreath of their children: Ann and Gilbert; Molly, Jem, Dorothea and Emmeline; Fitz, Carter and Eve.

Rachael, little Ann and Gilbert were gone. Jim also . . . By shipwreck and by prison . . . Yet Jim was there at the Maria Lode and here by Cherokee Creek that he knew so well, where he had shouted and splashed when he was a little chap. And little Ann and Gilbert played with the others. And Rachael stood beside her and smiled.

"Death is a birth," said Maria, "and there is balm in Gilead."

She sat stilly in the sun — an elderly woman now with grandchildren. But within she knew that she was as young as she was old.

As she sat, Drury came out of the wood and across the bridge and up the bank and sat beside her. "I felt somehow that you might be here." He put his arm about her and she leaned against him. "When you were little," she said, "it was the other way round."

They sat quietly, entirely accorded. "It is beautiful," he said, "for us all to be together so. Jim's a little fellow yonder, ducking in the creek. — And all the children. — Ann and Gilbert. — And Rachael. *Yea, forever and forever, my darling!* And many besides — a great host."

· XXIX ·

IN November, Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge.

An icy Christmas. Then entered in dark hues 1864. The North drafted another half-million men. The winter went by with struggle and swaying to and fro. The spring came, and early in May was fought the battle of the Wilderness, and in Georgia Sherman began to burn his way to the sea. In Georgia, Dalton and Resaca. Back in Virginia, as June entered, the great bloody fight of Cold Harbour.

Albany County had lain all this while a lifted, mountainous country, out of invaded territory, vast though that was, away from marching to and fro, away from battle great and small, away from raid and foray; blessed, it was aware, in all that. It took its share of general loss, but its ground was not trampled. Now, suddenly, a great raid developed itself from a blue-clad army concentrated for its reasons at a point far nearer than Richmond. Its object was to harry country that had not been harried, removing the goods and depressing the spirit of yet another piece of territory. It moved with celerity and it was some thousands strong. An arm of it entered in midsummer Albany County.

Such a raid meant the burning of many dwelling

houses, of stables, barns and storehouses, of mills and bridges. It meant the last draining of cattle, horses, and such foodstuff as might be taken away. It meant destruction of fences and the trampling ruin of crops. It meant looting. It meant invitation to the Negroes to know themselves free by Emancipation Proclamation and to quit all service. It meant not the extremity of war but a very considerable slice of the injury thereof.

There could be no helpful opposition. Representation to officers commanding, perhaps, in which case there might be guards set for women and children — escort maybe from homes before the torch was applied — occasionally the burning given up and the troop drawn off. . . . Albany County drank its cup. It might have been worse; in some wars it would have been worse; but all the same it had tragedy in it.

Elderfield and round about got the depth of it. High Hill was burned and Linden. Molly and the children were miles away at the White Sulphur, half abandoned as it was. The overseer and the Negroes saw the place burn; they got what they could, but most of it was carried away. Linden burned; the family had time enough to get to the overseer's house and sink there upon the steps and watch their home go; but Major Inglesant had a stroke and died that night week.

When Old Cherokee River had been crossed the bridge was burned. It was sunset; the invaders camped between the river and the town.

"Representation" went from the town; such prominent citizens as James Randall, Baliol Robertson, Cadwallader Webb, William Macduffie, Doctor Conroy of the Episcopal church, Doctor Keith of the

Presbyterian. James was the spokesman and he spoke sanely and well. But what especially was the use? The orders under which such a raid operated were, in essence, to increase its own side's sense of power and possession and to impress the opposite camp with its powerlessness and dejection. In bounds, of course, and nothing against the canon.

The Representation returned to the town and the night passed. In the morning occurred the occupation of Elderfield. The soldiery swarmed, the most of them good-natured enough, taking only what they thought they ought to have. Livestock, foodstuff, such goods as still existed in stores, what took their fancy in courthouse and tavern and shop and such like places — all that went as a matter of course. But at first no private house was entered and no torch was set.

In the afternoon it began to be different, though yet without license. A notion had been taken that, despite responsible denial, there were yet in the town Confederates in uniform, perhaps even a number of them, hidden in these old, capacious houses. . . . There had been a dozen such, men on leave or wounded, but notice sufficed and all were gone, as far as might be; quite out of range or hidden in obscure farmhouses off all main ways. . . . A few men like Ralph Morrison, permanently injured, lastingly out of the running, would not be molested and did not quit the town. But the notion that others were present was taken up by the visitors and there began entry to search. Toward evening another notion prevailed. Half a dozen buildings at least should be fired finally to stamp the occasion in the Elderfield mind. The court-

house was attempted but found difficult to consume. Warren's tavern was easier. Baliol Robertson's law office was burned. By now it was night. A flaming light picked out the sign above the door of the *Albany County Herald*.

They wrecked and burned the old building behind the buckeye trees. James and Drury Randall, seeing the troop about the courthouse, entered their own place of business and began quietly, with no light other than the fiery one that came through the windows, to place important papers and ledgers in sacks that might be taken through the door and garden at the back to a safer place. Presently Bob Price and Crumpet were there to help. They worked swiftly, speaking in low voices. They heard the soldiers on the brick pavement without the street door, then a crash against it. "It is enough," said James. "Let us be off." He picked two or three things from his desk, the Napoleon paper-weight among them. Together they lifted the sacks and passed noiselessly through the long room and out at the door where first Preston McGregor and then Crumpet had been wont to sit reading of crude adventure. The bit of old garden with two or three ancient fruit trees, the gate, a lane. They went down this in the dark and into Willow Street and so on to the small house that James owned, that had been Aunt Patsy's. It stood dark among its trees, no one living in it. The four made entry and hid the sacks within a closet, then went away and returned to High Street. As they neared the old building that was dear to them, even to Crumpet, they saw the red fire burst from the windows. There had been paper, wood,

inflammable matters enough. It began to burn fiercely. The leaves of the buckeye trees shriveled and caught.

The half-dozen buildings that the raid considered it should fire grew to fifteen large and small. A high summer wind had sprung up and carrying sparks far and near helped matters on. A private house caught from the post office and another from Penfield's pharmacy. High Street swarmed with the invading soldiery and with Elderfield folk. These last might not strive to put out fires. They must not oppose nor offend; it was War! War it was!

The two Randalls stood over against their place of business and watched it in the red-lighted night go to pieces. They saw the sign burn, the roof take fire, the roof crash in. Bob Price and Crumpet kept with them. Bob swore under his breath and Crumpet whimpered, but the father and son stood controlled and steady. They spoke little. Once James said, "It's ironic, isn't it?"

"Yes, ironic . . ."

They watched that which they loved vanishing from the earth, save only the two outward chimney stacks and a piece of wall that would not down. Time passed. Right and left and by them poured voices triumphant or appalled, and hurrying feet and great lights and shadows, as the fires rose and fell. At last their own loss stood plain; a broken shell with downfallen timbers and supports in a smoky ruin. They stood now in the dark. James drew a long, slow breath.

"The old place —"

Said Drury, "'In with the whirl and out with the swirl' . . . The great wheel. . . . But the place has

its soul and it perishes not. As for you, Father, I love you and honor you. Your work's not done nor the good of it."

"Perhaps — perhaps," said James. "Well, we can do nothing here and your mother and the others must be anxious. Thank you from my heart, Bob, and thank you, Crumpet. — Let's go, Drury."

The next day the raid departed Elderfield and the county.

June in its beauty gave way to July. Grant and his army invested Petersburg. The South met defeats by land and by sea. It came on to be September. Sherman took Atlanta. Sheridan devastated the Valley of Virginia. October stood in the color of stained glass. Cedar Creek was fought. November rain, November snow, and the grim battle of Franklin, Tennessee. Through December further defeat; a dark Christmas. The entrance of the year 1865. In February, Charleston occupied. On the third of April the Evacuation of Richmond. On the ninth the Surrender of Lee. On the fourteenth the Assassination of Lincoln. On the twenty-sixth Johnston's Surrender. The War at an end. May came thronged with blossoms and the song of birds.

· XXX ·

DRURY and Albany were hoeing corn. The war had been over two years and more; Drury was forty-two, Albany about the same age. They remembered each the other since they were urchins in the Old Street place, with the quarter by the creek. The white and the black, they had played together as such children did; as they had put on inches they had roamed together the creek side and the woods on the errands of the ten-year-old. Later came the change. Albany worked with his hands and the strength of his big frame. Drury went to school, consorted with his own color, departed for the University, became a man. Still when they encountered each other there occurred the grin of ancient memories. . . . When there came to be Cherokee House, Albany was given to Drury, who promptly freed him and paid him cabin and food and a wage. Albany never married; year after year he kept with "Marse Drury" and served in and out the house.

Now he and Drury and Tom hoed the corn as they had ploughed and planted, as later they would gather and shuck and shell the great ears, as they would cut and stack for fodder the great stalks.

The aftermath of Defeat-in-War was upon Albany County and many another hundred counties in a tier

of country from the Mississippi to the Atlantic and from the Potomac to the Gulf. The immediate aftermath, to say nothing of the extending, was to last about ten years, of which two and a little more had passed. Some fared a little better, some fared a little worse, but all drank the cup of deep impoverishment, and for those who felt it humiliation. Yet the sun shone, yet children played, yet folk laughed, yet the Essential might rise quietly, night or day, and widen and lighten the hearts of men.

The day was warm. Drury, Albany and Tom hoed through the long, bright morning, but at noon they laid off. Little money though there was in any Southern countryside still silver quarters appeared when a circus (on a ray from the North) came to town. The first since the war, a circus was due to perform that afternoon in Elderfield. Albany and Tom were going. Drury had also produced a quarter for Ailsa in the kitchen. But Ailsa, looking lovingly at the quarter, didn't want the circus.

"I's *got* religion, whatever they two men's got! Somebody done tell me circus en church begins with the same letter but I says, says I, de lakness ends right dar! *No!* I ain't gwine."

"Would you like the quarter anyhow, Ailsa?"

"Marse Drury, you know how I's saving up for dat church bonnet en shawl —"

In the Old Street house were summering Fitzhugh's and Evelyn's two boys, Fitz and Carter, eight and six. They were going to the circus; Uncle Ralph Morrison and his crutch were going to take them. Precious little they thought about war and recon-

struction! They imaged elephants and lions and fairies on white horses.

Their small sister Eve stayed with their mother, with the latter's kin in Loudoun. Their father stopped in Richmond, wrestling to make a living by the law where most fees were as yet but faint promises to pay. But to Fitz and Carter, going to Elderfield, to Grandfather's and Grandmother's, stood for heaven. Molly and Eskridge's four — Molly, Jem, Dorothea and Emmeline — were with Molly, still at the Old White in their old cottage. High Hill had not been rebuilt. That was a matter of course in these days. It stood a ruin and all the plantation was profitless enough. But Eskridge meant to rebuild and restore . . . if it took him twenty years to be in a position to do so. It might take twenty. If he couldn't do it, then Jem should. . . . Young Molly was seventeen, Jem between fifteen and sixteen, Dorothea and Emmeline coming on. The White was what they liked — old playground, with plenty to play at even now. If everybody was poor, they were poor together, and the war was over, and Life was young.

Artemisia and Ralph had two children: Randall whom they called Ranny and Artemisia called Mysie. They were little things as yet. When there were four Morrisons, Ralph rented from his father-in-law Aunt Patsy's small old house in Willow Street. There he and Artemisia and their children lived with the morning-glories and the old cherry tree. He turned to teaching, having a good education, and old Mr. Beck and his school being dead. Artemisia gave with gaiety music lessons to such as could and would take them.

She was a musician, though not such an one as her mother. Ralph's wedding gift to her, "before the war", had been a noble piano.

Molly, Jem, Dorothea, Emmeline; Fitz, Carter, Eve; Ranny and Mysie. War, defeat, impoverishment, limitation, of course affected them. But they were the wave behind the wave. For them Old Winter slept at the feet of the Fairy Queen.

The *Albany County Herald* had not risen from the ashes of the old building. All was gone, the house, the press, all wherewithal and equipment. Where might money be had to replace such things? For all and sundry money had come crashing down; the money of the Confederacy was as waste paper; gold and silver were scarce indeed. James had not the money nor could he borrow it.

Eskridge — he had opened upon it once to Eskridge; not fully, but putting forth as it were a feeler. But Eskridge, before more could be said, had turned into the highway of his own troubles. Four children, and every last one of them, and Molly herself, by nature extravagant. High Hill. How could he ever rebuild or restock? Yet he had a passion for the place; he and Molly and the young ones. The future of everything was dark enough. Maybe ten years from now a man might begin to see his footing. James agreed in his heart that his son-in-law could not help without risk of being never repaid. . . . No. Eskridge had always been generous with money; he simply in justice to his own could not. Nor, probably, could he raise by hook or crook such a sum if he would. Eskridge had it in him, unless conditions remained

forever adverse, to die a rich man. But that was for the long future. In his "ten years" I shall be, thought James, an old man.

Eskridge sat with his square chin in his hand that was shaped for material power. "You don't mind if I speak out, sir? I don't believe that the *Herald* will get much backing to bring it alive again. Perhaps you've been right all this time. It's possible, and it looks more possible than it did when we all began this thing. I'll allow that. Perhaps as time goes on, more and more people will take up with your order of thinking. But they won't do it just now. They that are victorious won't, you may bet your bottom dollar! And we that are beaten and are drinking gall and wormwood won't. We'll put on a deadly earnest in insisting that we were and are right, — lock, stock and barrel. Even those who five years ago voted as you voted. . . . There are too many dead. . . . Unless you changed and counter-marched I don't believe many would take or read the *Herald* come back again. I don't believe you'd get a living out of it. I know you don't think as much about that as about some other things. Still . . ."

James listened with his usual steadiness. "There's common sense in what you say, and I've always in a measure worshiped common sense. No, certainly, I'm not offended; why should I be? And as to the money, Eskridge, I see your difficulties — the impossibilities rather. I'm aware, too, that hope may be fooling me when I say "I'll repay." It's true enough what you say about the *Herald*. It would not sing the same song, for all that is past and gone, and new things are upon us. It would try to be useful in a

more or less new world. But what you say about the feeling of a defeated people is very just. And the paper would have no margin, where bills must be paid, patiently to wait. . . . I am like others. I catch at straws, but when all is said, I know them for what they are. . . . Yet men sometimes live by gathering a bundle of them."

"I knew you would understand, sir," said Eskridge, relieved. "I, too, am catching at straws. We all are."

"Yes. You've got your deep and rough water also."

"What does Drury say about all this?"

"He says that whatever I can manage to do he will be with me. I can read him wherever he and I are concerned together and he cares — he has always cared — that I should do what I like to do. But his judgment is the same as yours, and the same as my own I might as well give up and say, as to any present feasibility. . . . Very well. I can face life with a steady eye and so can Drury."

"You've land enough."

"Yes. Land poor. There is no market at present for land; it can't be sold. Some of it is mortgaged. Another lot may have to go for taxes. Drury and I will farm what we can."

"The farmer is going to be very poor. He will be able, maybe, to feed his folk, but little more."

"Yes. I see that. It is something to have food and a roof."

"Drury writes. Has it ever paid him anything?"

"A little. Not much. His public is small. He could not publish during the war and he will have to wait now till these waves go down."

Eskridge drew an impatient sigh. "Troubled waters, if ever there were such! To have to fish in troubled waters. I, you, he, they, we! Well, sir, if wishes were horses — but they aren't."

"No. I appreciate your interest, Eskridge, and I see your difficulties as well as my own. — Well, the moral of it all is going to be that the *Herald* must wait upon the general resurrection. — In the meantime, Drury and I will farm."

They had farmed for two years.

The day was warm. The sun shone bright. From the hill one could make out, down in the big meadow, the circus tents and hear the brass band. It did not play "Dixie" — not yet, not yet! nor Northern marching tunes either, but tactfully, easily, in the circus' large, other-planetness, other airs known and unknown. There went the Grand Parade, stately, into the big tent. Drury, stretched under the oak at the brow of the hill, watched it go and also saw, within the covering tent, the massed folk upon the sweep of the benches. Fitz and Carter and many other young ones clapped their hands and jounced up and down. Older folk were turning children for a while with a sigh of content. Albany and Tom were happy in the section devoted to their color. . . . The elephants, the camels and the white horses. Drury remembered circuses thirty, thirty-five, years back. He saw young Drury Randall open-mouthed before the elephant, or sunk in a dream of prowess when the horses and their riders began to move swifter and swifter within the ring.

He was detached from that small boy, but he knew

him feelingly and regarded him most kindly. Moreover, he had him in trust to see what he could make of him.

The sun turned the show tent very white in the green meadow. He watched it another while, then lifting his big strong frame in its rough work dress, turned to the barn. He could farm with his hands and liked to work so, but he meant this summer to hire another man. He could farm with his head, likewise. Both he and James Randall could do that. They could begin to see their way. All were poor, but they were going to live.

Albany and Tom did not return till sunset. "It sho' was fine, Marse Drury! It sho' was fine!" After supper he could hear them in the kitchen with Ailsa and Mammy Doris. "They was all dressed up fit to kill! En they swung about in the top of the big tent, just the same as 'twere a tree, en then they let go en dived all that way into a net."

"They better look out they don't dive inter hell! En you two men better look out too! As for me, I's gwine forever en ever to church."

"In er new bonnet en shawl."

"I's gwine *decent* —"

"Don' let em worry you, honey. "That was Mammy Doris' mellifluous voice. "From all I done heah, the angels is, en always will be, right fine dressers."

Drury laughed and going by the door bade them all good night.

Mammy Doris talking that way to Ann and Gilbert. . . . How many years? Ten years ago. Ten years — ten years. . . . His daughter and his son entered the

house with him. They brought to his mind a day when they were little and he had taken them to a circus. Now he saw them youth and maiden. But there they were also, beside him in the circus tent — and they lay in their cradles — and they were unborn, unconceived — and yet they were forever and forever. . . . Two small bodies sunk in the Atlantic Ocean. . . . Two dead children — and they were living forever and forever.

Entering the house, he lighted his lamp and carried it through the silent place to his room. The windows stood open; a lighted space, and deep around the fragrant night. He placed the lamp upon a table, took from a drawer pencil and paper and sat down to write.

He wrote "The Trapeze."

In another drawer lay manuscript in two sheaves. He was in correspondence now with his old publisher in New York. Ten years and a little more had passed since anything of his had been published. Well, now again —

IN 1870 James and Drury Randall reëstablished the *Albany County Herald*. Little enough money they had with which to do it! Eskridge loaned a few hundreds, Fitzhugh sent a smaller sum, which was all he could manage, Baliol Robertson unexpectedly produced and brought himself to James five hundred dollars. All that the Old Street house could scrape and save went into the return to the family business. James achieved the sale of a piece of timber land; no great acreage and a small, small price per acre, but still something. Drury's work, quietly, imperceptibly almost, had increased its swing and reach. He had an audience now, though never great in number, on both sides of the sea. From the small sums that came to him he put aside and put aside for his father's held purpose, and his own held purpose, because it was his father's whom he loved. Moreover, he thought, each time, "This is for Gilbert. He might have grown into this work, as I before him grew into it."

Together, at last, they had enough to start in a small, small way.

Five years were gone by since the war. Still there held Reconstruction and *Vae victis*, impoverishment, loss remembered, loss actual, loss imagined, twisted vision, a cloudy day, a weakened earth. But some there were who could see through, and many indeed did

what their hand found to do and did it with courage. Hope and confidence began to cover, though lightly, lightly, the naked earth. The graves were green, the dead were blessed, the children were growing into their own minds and intentions.

Elderfield and Albany County and even the State agreed, however unconsciously they did it, to take back the *Albany County Herald*. . . . Maybe it, too, had been punished enough.

Macduffie's store fell vacant. Old Mr. Macduffie was dead. His son had been killed at Sharpsburg; his daughters were both married to men from other counties. The stock that had been meager enough for a long while was sold out, and the venerable brick store rented. James and Drury Randall rented it, and maybe later would buy it and add to it. It stood not a stone's throw from the old place. The line of buckeye trees extended that way; the courthouse that would not burn showed through a window its Doric pillars.

Preston McGregor, who had come out of the war Captain McGregor, returned to them. They could work well with McGregor and he with them; on a day he might come into partnership. Crumpet returned — compositor now — and old Bob Price. Father and son had two tiny offices. The old Piranesi, the Roman Aqueduct bringing water to a city from the hills afar, had perished in the flames. They gave from Old Street to hang in its place a painting that James' father had seen and liked and bought long ago, from the artist in Richmond. In it the Indian Great Chief Powhatan, and a child, his daughter, sat beneath heavy trees, watching upon their river

the three small ships, the *Susan Constant*, the *Good-speed* and the *Discovery*.

The two Randalls hung anew their sign; they settled in, the phoenix rose from its ashes, on Thursday as of old appeared the *Herald*. Elderfield and the county read it. They opened the paper. They pored over the news, local and general, the advertisements, items from the lesser neighborhoods of the county, discussion pro and con of burning questions, a correspondent in Richmond, a correspondent in Washington, an excerpt from a New York daily, market prices, James Randall's editorial and announcement of the old-new *Herald*, and his comment upon the affairs of Europe, where, with emphasis, there was enough to comment upon.

It read likewise the page that was Drury's.

"James Randall is over seventy, but he's never squandered nor been too stiff either with his body. He's what I call temperate. That's it — temperate and tempered. I love to find a phrase. He'll last till he's eighty-five, maybe ninety. Of course, his opinions have been running against our grain. But the grain has its own curves, maybe. He couldn't, I reckon, have raised up the *Herald* a while back. But now maybe it will be kind of interesting to find out what he has to say. It was never his trick to wail for the past. Acknowledge the old roadbed and be grateful and affectionate toward it too, but keep a-going —"

"What do you think of Drury Randall's page?"

"What do you think?"

"I asked you."

"I don't know what to think. Maybe he and James

Randall both have got hold of the future by the tail. Each of them in his different way. Maybe he sees something nearer the whole grain. *I don't know.*"

"Do you read it?"

"Yes. I used to and I reckon I'll begin again. Anyhow, I never *resented* it as some folk did and do. I kind of like the flavor. And I like him too. Kind of quiet fellow, liking well enough to do anybody a good turn and writing stuff that isn't easy to understand, though it looks simple enough upon the surface."

"The way I look at it, he's farmed his land himself these deep-in-the-night five years and hasn't pulled a long face either. That's taken bravery."

"You bet! A lot have had it and he's had it too. That's where both he and his father are orthodox."

So it began again, the *Albany County Herald*. Andrew Burns, who through circumstance had lost his own small farm, and yet was a good farmer and an honest man, with two sons of an age to help him, agreed, for a share in the crop and a yearly payment, to farm the Randall acres. Four colored men, two paid by James and two by Drury, worked under him. The round of things readjusted, re-began, upon another round of the spiral.

Every day again to the home of the *Herald*. Sequences of action directed by the old, directed by the new, directed by the two in combination or in fusion. Contacts that seemed the same and yet subtly were not; contacts that seemed new and yet without notice turned an innocent, familiar face — life in the eternal figure eight, going forth and returning, returning and going forth, world without end, amen.

THE work of the Holy Ghost. Drury Randall felt it so, up toward the head of Old Cherokee, on a clear afternoon that he took for wandering. By nature he was a great walker — a Peripatetic taking his Center with him. Now he rested on a rocky ledge well up on the mountain. Below him he heard, though subdued by the height, Tumbling Run. It was autumn, a year and a half after the setting-up again of the *Herald*.

How many times had he been upon this mountain and heard that sounding water! From boyhood on, and now in middle age still was he there with the clean rim above him and the sky into which one might step — sooner or later might step, and still it would be one and old and familiar — blessed earth and blessed sky.

So still it was! So fulfilled with being — time in space and space in time — the pleroma. . . . Eagles had not vanished from these mountains; he watched one coming now to a cliff beyond him. It sailed, and he sailed with it, the blue, upper sea.

He sat with mountain laurel about him and passed to contemplation of the life packed in books. He had one with him, in the pocket of his old brown coat. Presently he drew it forth and, settling himself into a nook of the rock and a bower of the glistening and evergreen shrub, began to read. It was a recent edition of "Leaves of Grass" with "Passage to India"

and other poems added. He knew the earlier volume; now this was in his hand.

As his body read, he himself saw his body, half lying there, reading, perceived it as it was, a living fiber of Great Nature inspired from within. He perceived afar Mulaprakriti and Parabrahm. The book dropped from the hand, the body half lay, half rose, like Adam in the Sistine ceiling, from the bare red earth. He himself achieved detachment. . . . It did not last, it could never yet endure. . . . He returned to Plato's cave from that standing without, that moment of rising life. It was not his first such moment, but added itself to others of its like. They were not numerous, no, by no means numerous. But he was building of them a center that would work change throughout old empires. The very cave itself might begin at long last to change estate. No matter how long it took — no matter at all.

Drury lay still upon the face of the rock while the long reverberation of his moment passed by degrees from conscious attention into the tissues, where it persevered. . . . At last he was using the old senses only, though with a freshness there too, seeing that each of them also drank at the spring.

The sun rode nearer the horizon — a bird was singing, a hermit thrush. The bell note — the ineffable, eternal memory and promise. He praised God within and without himself and saw that within and without are but grades of one another.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The bird sang and the bird sang. It was silent, then again the pure and penetrating note; silence, the note. Again he had his instant. As from above downward, to use figures of space, he saw upon the rock his human frame and the animation, the life, that he, the spirit, had given and still gave. It was his bodily self, his charge, his own to bring it on. Each spirit had the like; each "each" in the world. He saw what had been wrought and in long and wide perspectives the larger things to bring about. . . .

Presence and scope sank through long gradations of color and song. When all was still and homely and Old Cherokee below the top, Drury lay relaxed, his arm beneath his head, along the lichened rock, beside the mountain laurel. The eagle was gone from the cliff, the thrush departed for a farther tree. He watched the quiet sky, the gleam afar of the river, the flecks of color and shape that were Elderfield. After a time he rose, put his book in his pocket, and tier by tier swung down the mountainside.

At Cherokee House, seated on the rounded steps before the door, he found Ann. "I walked up to get a book."

"Did you find it?"

"Oh, yes, two. What a mercy you used to buy books! There'll be a number to buy when you can begin again."

"You and Mother are my best borrowers. You'll have to make a list of what especially you want."

"All right. Mother and I have determined that travel and book-buying are beginning to put out shoots. Ten years locked up in the cold earth —"

"Yes. It's in my mind, Ann, to go journeying a

little next spring. Wouldn't you like to go along?"

"Oh, yes, I'd like it!"

"Well then, let's go together."

They sat side by side, brother and sister, their hands clasped over their knees. The sun was westerling; the long, level rosy shafts and the alternate lanes of shadow patterned the rolling and mountainous land, field and meadow, stream and forest. A light air blew about them, the distant, slendering, poetized sounds of late afternoon visited their ears.

"You are not unhappy, Ann?"

"No. — Sometimes I am."

"Hugh lives, as Rachael lives and the children live.

"I should have said 'yes' to him. — We should have married. I thought and I thought — and there was a sickly, twisted pride in me. And all the time it was he who was going to die — to be killed in two or three years. We might have had a bit of rich happiness. . . . There are Artemisia and Ralph, and he's a cripple for life, but they are happy."

"I myself wish that you two had married. But cease to regret and begin to deepen love and understanding. At another meeting in the endless to-come, power again will lie in your hand. By no means — by no means at all — has it ended between you and Hugh."

They sat and watched the sunset and then walked down the road together and across the creek and up through the Old Street garden to the house where the lamps were lighting. They both loved this house in which they were born; they both had a sense of the

intensities of houses, the palimpsests, the dreamers, the entities that they were.

Supper was preparing. Fragrance of coffee, of delicate bread rose from the brick kitchen detached from the house. Aunt Ceres there was growing old but yet reigned, with a daughter who would take her place. The brother and sister crossed the wide back porch and entered the house. "I'll tell Mimy," said Ann, "to put a place for you."

Drury went on to the old big parlor whence came a lingering, dreamy music. His mother sat at the piano. She turned her forever graceful head. "Ah, Drury —" He went up to her and put his arm about her. She rested against him. "Your father has just come in."

Young Molly and Jem were spending a fortnight with Grandfather and Grandmother, after which they would join the others at the White. Carter, Fitzhugh's second, a delicate boy, had come for the whole summer to Elderfield. Molly was a young lady now, lovely as her mother, and engaged. In the autumn Jem would begin his second year at the University. When he had his education, Eskridge would provide for him among his interests that already, Reconstruction or no Reconstruction, were gathering themselves together and mounting. Eskridge was a long way yet from where he could begin to rebuild High Hill, but the day would come when the walls would rise.

At the supper table sat James Randall and Maria, Emmeline Mason, Drury, Ann, young Molly and Jem and Carter. Three generations. The food was simple but well cooked and enough. Mimy waited. The china

and linen were not as they once had been but well enough, though a little heavy and much darned. The old melon-shaped and fluted silver brought with Maria to Elderfield had been buried during the raid in the war, now seven years past, but took no harm from the earth. The season was summer, the night of Elderfield warmth, but that was not low country heat. Faint agreeable sounds entered at the open windows, garden scents, small moths to the lamp — but these could not hurt themselves against the big, moony shade.

Molly was a talker like her mother. Small, slight, in a white muslin with three flounces, wide sleeves and a blue sash, on her ring finger an engagement ring, with a round of small diamonds, that had been the great-grandmother's of the man to whom she was betrothed, with her rich hair in a great coil at the nape of her neck, she was full of chatter, girlish, whimsical, not unwitty.

Jem, on the contrary, lived and moved a reticent youth, something of his father's build, with an odd look, too, at times, of James Randall. His sister's talkativeness made him impatient. "Oh, you whirl and dart like a humming bird! You tire me with your too many flowers."

Carter ate languidly, in a dream. He was off with Mayne Reid, after a thousand Indians, and a thousand Indians after them. His great-aunt Emmeline looked out for his plate. "Yes, you can have the coddled apples."

Molly, after a final whirl and dart, settled upon a twig of silence and folded her wings in an ecstatic,

secret contemplation of her ring. Warwick and she — oh, how happy they were going to be! What a golden life!

James began to talk with Jem. Affairs. American and world affairs. Jem put forth what the men at the University said. Ann listened. Jem would likely do them all credit. . . . Hugh. Hugh was young like that, when first he came to Elderfield from the University with Drury. At first it was Molly with whom he was taken. . . . "I was so much the younger."

Behind the old silver salver and urn sat Maria, Drury beside her. Drury was regarding Carter across from him. "He's away in the life of the book." Maria listened to them all just as she knew that Drury listened to them all, whether they were audibly speaking or not. To her it was all a kind of music. The past and the present and the future interchanged, dissolving the one into the other, or gathering into a chord that from some elsewhere she was hearing. The black and white keys, the tones and the semitones, the major and the minor, the scroll of the octaves, the piece that was playing. . . . The table changed and changed back again. Once it was Mr. Randall and herself and their young family coming on — Drury, Molly, Jim, Ann, Fitzhugh, Artemisia — and now it was filled this way, and to-morrow some other arrangement, and they all persisted one within another, and she doubted if a tone ever died or if music were not everlasting. However simple, however careless and chance seeming . . . To go on, to hear itself and some one to hear it forever.

After supper there came in Artemisia and Ralph,

Ranny and Mysie being left in the Willow Street house with Aunt Patsy's old Dinah. Presently, too, there was heard Baliol Robertson's step. Molly and Jem were expected for charades and maybe quiet home dancing at the Inglesants, who had lost Linden by fire, and three men of the family in battle, and old Major Inglesant by a stroke, but who indomitably, the remnant of them, lived and entertained in the old Scott house on Washington Street.

Molly and Jem departed. The rest of them sat and talked in the big parlor with the open windows and the soft lamplight and the piano and the old rosewood and mahogany and the three or four portraits. They conversed from where they were, in the world of the approaching last quarter of the nineteenth century and around that all of time, sliding from them afar and under the horizon ahead. The elder Randall and Baliol Robertson and Ralph were the chief talkers, though now and then Drury was appealed to. Emmeline Mason knitted a shawl, Ann sat with Amber beside her, Artemisia put to the men thoughtful questions. Maria rested upon the sofa, all the room within the scope of her soft dark eyes that might be trusted to be young forever. Carter kept in a corner by a reading lamp. The table supported his book and elbows, his hands, his chin. He was away, away in the desert upon a swift steed.

· XXXIII ·

ANN and Drury in the spring weather went traveling. The *Herald* had been established now a couple of years; with all the hardship and scarcity, the lean and tragic, that yet persisted in the wide environment, it was in resolute life. Drury could leave Elderfield, though not for long, and had a small wherewithal in silver and gold and greenbacks with which to take care of expenditure.

Still they must travel by the old stage over the mountain to the railway. The railway had never yet got to Elderfield, though with improving times it surely would do so. . . . The train and all the incidents of train journeys. . . . Ann at her window, in the wood-brown poplin that suited well her coloring, looked out upon the dogwood in blossom up and down and over the land, upon a country war-ravaged and depressed, but beautiful. Her eyes were hungry for it all, her fingers clasped one another tightly, she did not wish to talk or to read the magazine she had brought. The car was anything but full, all movement to and fro being yet so circumscribed. Drury left her in the seat alone and by his own window regarded with his own passion the land and its orchard bloom and the dogwood, a silver forest within a forest, snow in May.

Their first visit was to the University, where they would stop three days with cousins. Several of these, with Jem, met them at the station, whence a venerable carriage conveyed them to one of the houses designed by Mr. Jefferson for teachers. Classic it rose and columned, upon the lawn. The University was straitened like all things else, but on it worked.

The cousins made the two from Elderfield very welcome. Clan news, clan touch. The supper table breathed family gaiety, the parlor afterwards the same. And how are you? — And how are you? And don't you remember? — And don't you remember?

These cousins had not been at this University of old times, when Drury was a student. They could talk of everything here and hereabouts during the war and after the war, and just before the war but not of the years before that. He spoke of his old professor who had died, midway of the war, at seventy-odd. Yes, of course everybody remembered him, though he had not been teaching for several years before his death! He cultivated his garden. A strange old person he grew to be, with his white hair and his pipe and his hyacinths and pansies. He had not liked the war. "I beg your pardon, Drury; I believe you did not either," but he did not say much about it. Then he had died — after Chancellorsville, it was.

"I think of him as a gardener who knew how to help plants to grow. I was one that he helped," said Drury.

"Yes," agreed the teaching cousin, more spare and thoughtful than the others. "He was an influence, undoubtedly, in his time. I remember his speaking one

day of a letter from you. I rode by his house and there he was in his garden with his white hair blowing and his pipe and his watering pot and his clove pinks. I stopped for five minutes and he said that he had had that day a letter from you."

"Yes. Every six months I wrote to him and he to me."

The other nodded. "It's a great thing when a teacher and a student are sympathetic."

At the other end of the room, where the young people were gathered, started forth music. The daughter of the house, a girl of seventeen, sang very sweetly, accompanying herself upon the guitar.

"Maxwelton braes are bonny —"

A couple of students domiciled with the family, and Jem from across the lawn, from the old Range that had been Drury's also, clustered about her. Up rose with hers their young voices.

"Kathleen Mavourneen —"

Later, Drury walked with Jem over the old familiar ways and paths, under a round moon that silvered all. "The men want to hear you before you go," said Jem. "There's a knot of them here that understand and praise your work. I don't say that they're numerous; they aren't. But the others are just as much interested opposing it. And of course the *Albany County Herald* has been going on a long time. The interruption when it couldn't go on doesn't seem to count. Things get smoothed out. Even you and Grandfather not believing in the war and not supporting it — a

lot of men don't stomach that either — but they'll say now that they know you were honest."

"Come, that's a good deal!"

The moon shone down. Drury halted. "This is my old room. Twenty-nine years ago I first stepped into it from Elderfield."

"John Llewellyn has it now. But it's known to have been yours. Would you like to go in? — There's no light. Llewellyn's not there now. But I'll speak to him to-morrow —"

"No, do not. I can see it without the lamp, without using the doorstep. . . . I was a seeker then as now, thrown back and buffeted by the waves."

Leaving the door, they presently reached that one through which Poe had come and gone. "I used to halt here, in all lights and weathers, and try to encompass and understand that life —"

The older and the younger man walked forth by the rotunda to winding paths and an onward-stretching country road. "Shall we keep on a bit? The moon is so bright. I have known all this so well —"

They walked and talked, the uncle and the nephew, for the better part of an hour. Jem was going to be a practical and able personage like Eskridge, with a seasoning intellectually of James Randall. Young as he was, he had his mind upon the machine. "They aren't going to last forever, these depressed conditions. The raging feeling is beginning to go down. The best minds say it and it is true. We'll lift our noses from the grindstone. . . . The old grindstone that everybody, and not just conquered us, has served and serves! There are advancing ways — don't you think,

sir? — of getting the ax ground. Invention now. Father says, and I believe him, that it's the American specialty, and that it's just begun. Oh, of course it began long ago — Columbus couldn't have gotten anywhere without it, nor Father Noah either, for that matter! But it's coming leaping now, Father says, and I have observed. Well, I want to be in at the handling of it as it comes."

"It'll need a strong wrist and a compass eye," said Drury. "Phaëthon, you know. The sun god himself must be on the job."

"Father's in for communication and transportation — roads and railways and canals and bridges and telegraphs — here and now in the blessed South. That's absolutely all right. But I've my eye on a little later and all over. Things are coming to the fore that we don't dream of to-day."

"I agree."

They walked and talked, and returning through the moonlight to the house on the lawn, said good night, nephew and uncle, man of the University before the war and man of it after the war, — Drury Randall, the son of James and Maria, and Jem, the son of Eskridge and Molly; the young man who would handle power in one mode and the older man who would handle it in another.

Morning dawned, bright and cool. Later morning, breakfast, a cheerful table, Ann looking rested and well and releasing to the others all her pleasantness. The day rolled on like a tide. They walked about the grounds and went into the library; there were visitors; in the afternoon they drove to Monticello.

That evening, in a place of assembly, Drury spoke to these students, the faculty generally being also present. There was curiosity about him. The war was over in which other things than letters and a certain order of thought resounded. The long, disastrous, bitter aftermath was not over, but the midnight hour had been gone through; even the three-in-the-morning hour. The air began to stir, a cock was crowing. . . . The day would differ, if by ever so little, from the old day; differ in some adjusting, onward-going sense. Perhaps it would more consciously include Poetry.

But when Drury came to speak, he did not say that it would or would not. He said that Poetry was universal and was always present.

He talked easily, quietly, without mannerism. What he said seemed away from the immediate scene, but not more so than the lasting earth and sky, the river that wound, the fire that animated; that is away from and through it, underneath it and above it, intimately its own and yet the "own" enlarged. He did not seem to care for controversy.

The next day presented many slight and not so slight treasures wrapped in the tissue of the minutes and hours. Another morning and again they were traveling.

They journeyed to Washington through country that as to human features looked an old and broken being. War had bent it and wrinkled it; had taken away and not given again. The flail had beaten down, the besom had been used, the torch had been set. The war was over seven years, yet it would take long to bring "fortunate" back here. The sun shone, the dog-

wood waved everywhere its white arms, many fields were ploughed, but yet — but yet —

Ann sat at her window, Drury behind her at his. Her eyes smarted with tears.

After a while she spoke. "It is terrible."

"The terrible, too, is to be contemplated. With steadiness, with wonder, at last with will."

He came and sat beside her and took her hand in his own large and strong one. They sat so, looking out of window, he over her shoulder. "There's a burned house, nothing but the chimneys. There's another — another — Do you see that ruined mill? — There was a bridge over that river — it's gone."

"Ann," he said, "I see a thousand, thousand, thousand such things, beyond counting, up and down all lands and times, and the cold shadow that is made. At times the cold shadow holds me with seeming completeness. Then I suffer. I have suffered my share. But shadow is diminished light, and suffering is diminished joy. If the hoard has been lessened, the hoard can be increased; if the child is lost, the child can be found. At last one may come to a place of consciousness where the mill, the bridge and the house stand, and the child is an eternal playfellow and comrade. Then one's country is seen, is felt, to be an enduring Being, a Star of whom no pulse is ever lost. I have come to know that, to love that, though with so partial a love and knowledge. I cannot yet with any power put it into practise. But it is true.

In all things I see eternal unfoldment and the goal of it all is good."

Ann's hand rested in his. "Oh, Drury, from when I

was a little thing, wandering around with Catarina, I've always felt at home with you! I'm inactive and you are active, but all the same I get the great wash and the deep sound of you."

"Well, then," he answered, "we are householders and pioneers together. Do not let storm and the wreckage of storm weigh too heavily."

Old forest ran beside them out of window. "I am glad they did not cut this down. . . . Oh, the dogwood! And there is pink honeysuckle —"

They passed a small clearing with a negro cabin. Children were about the door, a woman was drawing water from a well, a man and an ancient raw-boned mule ploughed a field. "They too!" said Ann. "It's a long road to Jordan."

"Granted! All the same, they are as safe in the Whole as are we."

He returned to his seat and its window. Before Ann, beside the stepping on and on without the glass, glided images, the one into the other. Hugh and she in that so short, so slight even, outward togetherness . . . One summer and the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Outermost Island . . . Hugh at Elderfield . . . Her room in Old Street and her treasures there. Her mother playing — Mozart, Beethoven. The golden day lilies blooming in a row . . . Church. A sermon that a visiting minister once had preached and she had greatly liked . . . Old Cherokee River with the fireflies at night . . . Aunt Patsy Randall . . . Jim . . . The land of death and its inhabitants. Conscious, remembering folk — why not? — with joys and expectations. Thousands and thousands of interrelated people. Aunt

Patsy. Jim. Hugh . . . Oh, the dogwood, the dogwood in bloom! Old Street and Ceres singing in the kitchen and Amber on the back porch stretched in the sunshine.

The dogwood went by in white clouds, the woods, the little streams, the fields, the occasional houses, cabins, hamlets, roads, a few folk upon them. Certainly the country could not be said to have a prosperous air. Ravage and ruin had dug with claws strong and fierce. Yet time and Nature had overspread a bloom. The sun shone, the sky was blue, folk went about their business, better things might be aloft.

Hour by hour the leagues dropped away. And here was Alexandria, and here stretched the great Potomac. Brother and sister watched in silence that crossing and the dome of the Capitol that grew and grew.

In Washington they stopped at a quiet, pleasant boarding house kept by quiet Southern folk, distant connections of their own. It suited their purse and their personal tastes were simple enough. They had five days to spend in this city. Drury had been here before, but not Ann.

They viewed the physical Washington, not yet at all what it would become in beauty and fitness but with promise of it in space and plot. Everywhere streamed the May verdure and bloom. They saw President Grant driving down Pennsylvania Avenue. They went by boat to Mount Vernon, not cared for then as it came to be later, but with loveliness of spring and bird song, there by the vast river. In Georgetown lived in impoverished state in an old mansion that could not be kept in repair, three aging ladies, third cousins of

Maria's. Ann and Drury had supper with them; old negro butler, old Southern table, old ways.

"Ah, my dear! What a long purgatory! But now at last the General Amnesty Act."

"Yes."

"And your father, with his way of thinking — and you too, thought the same way, I believe — it may have been as hard for you as for any."

"No one escapes anything."

"I remember you as a small boy once with Maria at Mon Désir. And Ann — I am rejoiced that your health is better, my dear. Why did you both not come to us? Not that the Wardours are not very sweet folk. And Maria — Ah, I should love to see Maria! Emmeline Mason lives with you. Oh, old times, and oh, my soul! these times! — And you, Drury, you've become a poet. — Ah, Tennyson, Tennyson is our joy!"

Other places they went to and other things they did in Washington. Oftenest together, but Ann must have her daily rest, and Drury had certain errands of his own. Several of these had to do with the *Herald*, commissions of kinds, and contacts which James Randall wished if possible to reëstablish. He did his best here. . . . So much that was broken to knit together again — so much that was new and tenuous, airlike filaments hardly visible, hardly tangible, yet somehow to be made into cords. Quiet and steady in him stood the trained worker; he and his father were alike in that; the thing in hand must ever be done to the best of one's ability.

One half day he had for himself in Washington. He went to see, on a Sunday, Walt Whitman, who took

to him. The two talked for an hour in Whitman's small, clean quarters, then went for a long strolling walk together beside the Potomac.

The week passed. Ann and Drury were again within a train and all the green level country slipping by between them and New York. That city held them for another week, after which they went to Niagara Falls, and then to Boston, and then to Concord. Here was Mr. Emerson, a man now of sixty-nine, but perfectly remembering his long-ago visitor from Virginia. "Ah, I lost sight of you — and now I am very glad indeed to see you again!" Ann and Drury stayed at the hotel, but went to supper with the Emersons in the classically plain, white house among forest trees.

The New England supper over the two men sat together in the study. Mr. Emerson talked of changes. Henry Thoreau was dead and Hawthorne. He himself was fairly an old man now. What of that? A great adventure was nearer, that was all. He questioned and listened and nodded his silvering head, then talked again. When the evening was over, "I am glad you came," he said. "There can't be too many refund, re-made links."

The next morning Drury walked to Walden Pond. He lay beneath a white birch and looked into the still water. In the afternoon he rowed with Ann upon the Concord and the Assabet. In the evening they were again at the Emersons. The following day they made their return to Boston and in another twenty-four hours turned their faces southward.

· XXXIV ·

FROM Baltimore they took ship for Chesapeake Bay and journeyed morn to eve upon that mighty water, arm of the ocean and recipient of the ever-entering great rivers of Virginia. "Mother of Waters", the Indians named it. Ann, in her deck chair in the bow of the comfortable, easy-going, not crowded boat, with the shore to right and left now visible, now quite lost in distance, fell into a dream of the past, as it had unrolled itself upon and across these waters. She liked history and pictured it often to herself. . . . One piece of private story she was holding from her. Not till late afternoon, not till they reached the width and meeting place of bay and ocean, would she entertain that because she could no longer help it. She had an idea that Drury met it face to face from the first, but she would not or could not speak of it to him. He sat a little removed from her and so that she could not see his face; he remained very still. But there was nothing rigid about him. When the captain of the boat, passing, stopped to speak, he answered, then lent himself to the conversation that followed. Again, other passengers came that way. Two men who, it seemed, had once met him in Richmond recalled themselves to his memory and he stood and talked with them. But

when they were gone, he sank again into his chair with his face to the sea.

Ann had with her a book; she made believe to be lost in it, or leaning back she closed her eyes and seemed to sleep. She did not wish, ever, to be in Drury's way. To-day he should have his solitude. . . . After a while he rose as if to come to her, but perceiving that her eyes were shut, began to pace the deck that now, in their part of the ship, was empty of passengers. Ann watched him from under lowered lids. . . . The sea must always be with him, she thought, or here, or there, and yet — and that was the transcendence — nothing now had reproach or bitterness. He walked slowly up and down, up and down, then returning to his place sat bent forward, his arms upon the rail, his vision lost in the accord of ocean and air.

Later, when he saw that she was awake, he moved his chair beside her. "What are you reading?" Then, "I've 'Midsummer Night's Dream' in my pocket. Suppose you read it aloud?"

Ann had an excellent gift for reading aloud. All at home knew it and on occasion used it. "Here, Ann, you read —" So now she took "Midsummer Night's Dream" and read, the two in their nook, Drury's eyes upon sea or cloud or clear blue heaven.

They read it through — and then there was dinner and some slight talk with table companions — and then Ann said that she would lie down and rest and went to her small white cabin.

She slept for a while, for they had been up early, and her slender body must care for itself and give

itself rest. But waking after an hour she lay in her berth, regarding the flickering light and shadow upon the wall, inhaling the salt freshness pouring through the small window, wondering and remembering. Now it was her own story that might have been. "No, it is," said her heart. "It only waits. It is of an importance with all things. It is safe." She felt a still comfort and patience. She lay quietly for a while, then propping herself in her berth, took her book and read.

After a time came Drury's knock upon her door. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, indeed! I've had a good rest. I'll be up presently."

But it was a while yet before she left the cabin and mounted the companionway. "Let him have his own quiet."

The sun was westering, the water wide, sea birds following the boat. He had had their chairs put forward, well in the prow, in a place screened from observation. "We'll just sit quietly, if you don't mind, from now on. You've got your book?"

"Yes, but I won't be reading it, Drury. I'd like to keep watch with you. Don't think of me. I'll just be sitting here quietly."

He acquiesced. "It wasn't hereabouts, you know, Ann, but southward, between the capes, beaten out of our course. But we are nearing the breadth of things."

The minutes passed, the hour passed. The turning earth carried away from the sun the Atlantic slope of the Western Hemisphere. The sky was left with great washes of peaceful color. Presently, as these faded, would shine the stars; then a few hours and again the

dawn. The boat drew in toward the Eastern Shore. They were ready to make their landing.

The tavern where they had passed the night twelve years and more ago sheltered Drury once more. At seven in the morning his sister, stepping from her room forth upon the long porch, met him coming from the sandy, light-washed shore road. "Good morning, Ann! I have been walking."

"Did you sleep?"

"A part of the night. And you?"

"The same. It is a lovely morning."

An hour or so later the two were driving up the peninsula, through late May in that part of the world. The sandy road stretched on and on, the pines smelled strongly, the sun glinted in a thousand ways, the moving air told and told again of the sea. They were going now to that hamlet where Hugh Ball's father, a quite old man, yet kept store, and on the edge of which he lived with his wife in the old frame house, with old trees and blooming shrubs and flower beds around. Drury had written from Elderfield, and the two had answered by a simple and moving letter, begging for as long a visit as they could make. Now they were on their way. Ann sat with her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes following the long vistas among the pines. "Hugh — Hugh — I did love you, though I made myself seem so cold, though I weighed things so. . . . Some day, maybe — Who knows? Who can know? But it might be — it might be."

Before noon they arrived at the small, small village, and presently at the house. Tom Ball and his wife heard the wheels. They were on the rounded door

stone, they were at the gate, the venerable, humorous, village country merchant, the intelligent and capable woman who, after a moment's hesitation, took Ann in her arms.

That evening the two women talked of Hugh. "He had a strong, gay spirit. . . . He had a grief in his life and you know what it was, my dear . . . but he did not let it spoil things. He said to me when we spoke of it thoroughly once — and then, of course, we let it alone, my dear — he said, 'It's not for one of our little days — nothing is. Strong people go on through circumstance, and Ann and I are going to stay together. Perhaps we'll marry yet, and I'm going to bring it about if it's possible. But if it isn't, if something happens to her — or to me,' — and just there my dear, it's my judgment that deep in he *saw* — 'why, there are other days, Mother. You know,' he said, 'I'm finding out — and Drury has helped me a lot there — that *Inwardness* isn't just a word. It's a direction and a road.' And 'Yes,' says I, 'thereaways lies the kingdom of heaven, as said One who knows.' 'Well,' said he, 'if there's neither marriage nor giving in marriage there, still Ann and I may be joyfully together.' — And so I reckon it is, my dear. 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face'."

Three days went by. Then said Drury, "Will you go on with me to Outermost, or will you stay here?"

"Drury, I meant, as you know, to go on, but now I think I'll wait for you here. I never thought I could love them so or slip so into their lives. And I feel him — Hugh — constantly. It rests me so. . . . You go on to your island and I'll wait for you. I'll be with you

there too in love and thought, my dear, dear, dear brother!"

"We have never needed much explanation between us, Ann, have we? Which is a large part of true rest. All right, my dear."

The sailing boat that bore him a day or two later out to the island was like and not like Hugh's *Happy Day*. . . . And other boats. Will White was married years ago and gone to live elsewhere, taking his boat, the *Nancy*, with him. And long ago Captain Gilbert's *Star* had been taken from the water and rested still in the old boathouse. The *Star* rose and sailed in Drury's inner world. And there was, too, though he had never seen it with these physical eyes, the old Captain's old, stanch ship, the *Merry Star*. As he sat and watched the dwindling shore, the summer water, summer sky, the owner of the boat handling the sail, the breathing wind, the crisping sea, he was hearing little Ann and the old mariner where they sat, he in his chair with his staff at hand, she on the doorstep, her small hands about her small knees. "Tell me a story of the *Merry Star* —"

The minutes passed in Indian file, the miles slipped away beneath the keel. Now the boatman, who was a young man, kept silence with his passenger and now he spoke in a drawling, honey voice. He was some kind of kin to the Whites upon Outermost, the Whites and the Lambs, though not to the Outerbridges. He had been in the war — "Was most blown up at Petersburg. Yes, a lot of us was killed or crippled — Eastern Shore and islands too. Whereabouts were you fighting, sir? I went in at sixteen."

"I was not a soldier, in your sense of the word."

The boatman's eye acknowledged that the other was double his own age. "Oh, all kinds of necessary jobs kept a lot of good men out of uniform."

"Yes, I had my job," said Drury. "I withstood war."

"'Withstood war,' " answered the honey voice. "Oh, shucks, sir!"

The passenger laughed. "We won't argue it. Facts should so often just be let to lie awhile."

The boat sailed on. "Tell me about all the folk on Outermost. Jerry White died six years ago and Will has moved to a bigger island. I am going to Captain Gilbert's old house, though there is none in this life there now but Miss Hannah and Jane Outerbridge."

"Miss Hannah keeps spry, and Miss Jane kind of rules the island. They've got a second cousin of mine — Tom Lamb — working for them. Folk die and get born on Outermost, and them's the biggest happenings — except now and then a shipwreck, and that don't happen often."

He looked with attention at his passenger. "Except in a boat, I never was much good at putting two and two together. — Mr. Ball just came to our landing and said, 'Jeff, can you take a gentleman over to Outermost to-morrow?' And you told me your name when you got in, but I didn't hang on to it. But you're the Mr. Randall that married Miss Rachael Gilbert?"

"Yes."

"It's a story in these parts, the *Meherrin's* going down!" That much the boatman said impulsively. "I can remember being told and told about it when I was

a shaver," and then with native consideration fell quiet.

"I lost my wife and children," said Drury. "And yet I have never lost them and never will. — Now tell me more about the island."

Another hour and he saw the lighthouse, and then over the green marshes of the landward side the clustering small dwellings, and on the northern point the larger and the solitary house that Captain David Gilbert had built, and beyond it the untrammelled sea. They neared the thin, extended, gray landing, the sail came down, the boat lay alongside, he stepped forth, his very body was again upon Outermost.

Three or four island men stood about and he knew two of them and shook their hands. "Glad to see you, Mr. Randall. Glad to see you, sir!" Then, waiting for him, he found Jane Outerbridge. "I'm glad to see you." — "I'm glad to be here."

They walked in the salt and sunny air the better part of a mile to the Captain's house, that was still called upon the island "the Captain's house."

"How is Miss Hannah?"

"Spry as they make them! Of course she gets older every year, but it don't show as quick and hard in Gilberts as it does in some. She keeps her faculties and that makes her and ought to make anybody contented."

"And you?"

"Oh, I'm all right!" said the short, square-built woman. "Outerbridges have a way of taking what comes and living their life."

He looked about him. "Little has changed. Years

and years, and no years at all. . . . It has all grown more meaningful."

They were at the house. The same shell-bordered walk, the same flowers. "I wasn't certain," said Jane Outerbridge. "We've fixed a room in the house, and the two-room wing is all clean and ready. We thought you might take your choice?"

"I'd like the wing, please."

"Cousin Hannah said you would, but I didn't know — It's her nap time, so we'll go right in at the wing door."

They entered. "We've kept it always like you left it. It's aired and sunned regularly and in summer there's always a vase of flowers. Cousin Hannah and I often open the door and sit on the doorstep. She and Cousin Sarah used to do it. And while he could move about, the old Captain used often to take his staff and walk the path here on a bright day. . . . I reckon everything's here. It'll be an hour and a half till dinner."

He was alone. He sat in a chair by the table where stood a vase of flowers. After a while, moving, he took seat before the eastern window. Beyond it lay the great ocean, so short a way, just down the beach. Full-sailed, pearl-hued, a distant ship traversed the liquid plain, plying from continent to continent.

Ten days later, he recrossed to the Eastern Shore and joined Ann at the Balls.

"Yes, it is all right."

"Yes, it is," said Ann.

Another two days and they said farewell to these

lasting friends. "Good-by, good-by!" said old Tom Ball at the carriage side. "It ain't likely we'll meet again in these wearing-down bodies. I don't give mine more than another two-three years. But, Lord in Heaven, what of it? I reckon we'll keep on finding one another out and being interested!"

The horses moved and the ancient vehicle. "Good-by, good-by!" The house, the village, vanished from the outer sight but not from the eternal inner power which one day might throw outward, too, the deeper vision. The pine woods smelled so strong and fine, the salt air clung to all the Eastern Shore. They sat in silence, the brother and sister. Still waters run deep — still waters run deep.

That afternoon they took the boat that carried them across the Great Bay, voyaging over a mirror-like sea, under a fleckless sky. The west, as they drew near main Virginia, made a sky within a sky and caused by reflection a sea within a sea. They came to land and slept that night at Old Point Comfort. The next evening they were in Richmond with Fitzhugh and Evelyn. Five days, and they crossed the State to Elderfield, the land lifting as train and stage bore them on. All the dogwood had passed from white into emerald. Everywhere rustled and shone the cool broad leaves of June. But as they climbed, the rhododendron bloomed.

At last they quitted the train, and here waited the old stage and the strong horses and the long-known driver. "How are you, Sam?" "Just tolerable, sir! I hope I see you well, Miss Ann?" They drove over hill and mountain and so into the vale of the Old Cherokee. It was drawing evening-ward as they descended to its

crystal reaches. The tollgate and the long-known tollgate keeper. The covered bridge, the old tollgate house and the old bridge, had been burned in war. But because the bridge was essential, it had been the first thing rebuilt. The toll keeper had moved into a near-by cabin, but he would build a larger house as soon as he could. Again, greetings, and the hollow bridge sound, as horses and coach went through the dusk tunnel. Emerging, the rich vale opened before them, above it light in the west; the sun was down but color yet spread in sheets of pale gold and ruddy gold, rose and violet and cool emerald. The color faded, the dusk was here, a whippoorwill called from a thicket, the fireflies rose and fell and shone in un-resting hosts. The mountain air met them in waves of evening cool and fragrance. Now the lights of the little town began to peer.

Waves advanced from that also — contact and intermingling and absorption of kinds. The wheels moved more rapidly on the old, velvety road, the horses, too, smelled home. The stars were out, thoughts and feelings thronged but kept order; over all hovered love and understanding embraced. Now the stage evened the first house, now the road became a street, now Ann and Drury were returned to Elderfield.

High Street, old dwellings behind trees in fullest leaf, places of business, the row of buckeye trees and the vacant place where once had stood the home of the *Albany County Herald*. Perhaps yet, in James Randall's lifetime, it might be rebuilt. Perhaps Carter, Fitzhugh's son, might grow up to take hold. Preston McGregor and Carter would be a good team. . . .

Macduffie's store that was no longer a store but housed, and well enough, too, if nothing larger arose, the *Herald* . . . the *Herald*, the pillared courthouse, the Presbyterian church, the occasional folk on the brick sidewalks, the warm night, the voices. The key of Elderfield, the musical note, the subtle inner sense, the aroma, the touch. . . .

They being the only passengers, the stage would take them to Old Street. They kept silence, the brother and sister, each coming home. The evening wind went by, the stars shone, some one in a house was singing. Out of the eternal commerce called Memory approached Drury this laden ship and that. There approached two figures, a woman and a boy, walking to a revival, talking under the stars of "The Pilgrim's Progress" and the religious life, talking of Salvation. "Ah, yes, Aunt Patsy!" The over figures regarded the lower figures; winged figures, as it were, regarded the fledgling selves. "Ah, yes, we seek it and we find it! *'For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened'.*"

THE END

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